

Kindled From The Ashes

A short history of Brentwood College School

by Nicholas R. B. Prowse





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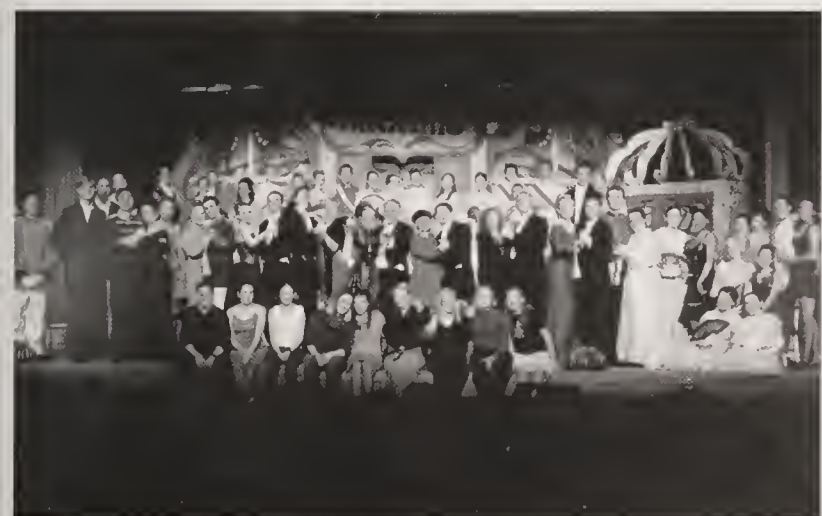


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(1923–1948, 1961–2001)

by

Nicholas R. B. Prowse





Original school crest, circa 1922

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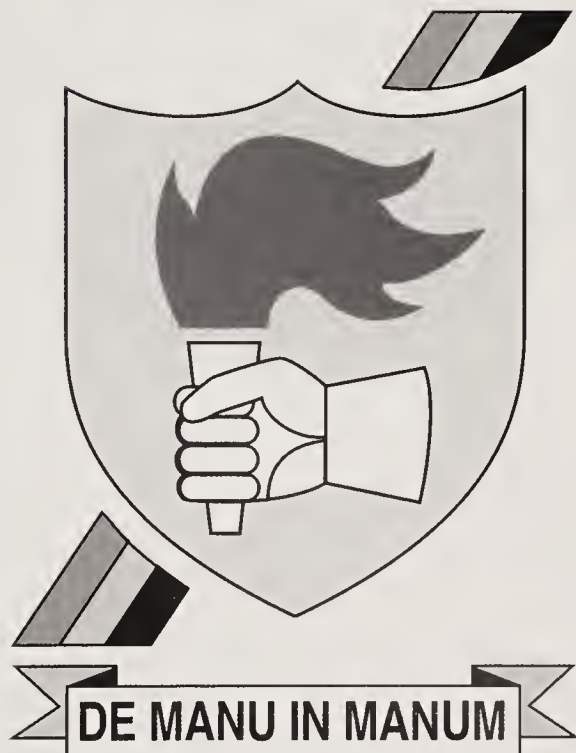
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School blazer crest



Colours crest



Today's Brentwood logo, designed after
extensive research by Lance Bean

*The temple of fame stands upon the grave:
the flame that burns upon its altars
is kindled from the ashes of great men.*

— William Hazlitt (1778–1830)

Dedication

This book is dedicated to Mr. David Mackenzie (founding Headmaster of the new school) and Dr. Maurice Young (parent, governor and Old Brentonian), two valued friends, and loyal servants of Brentwood College School — without whose enthusiastic support, remarkable foresight and exceptional leadership the school of today would not have risen from the ashes of the old school.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank all those who have helped in the preparation of this book, especially the many governors, teachers, parents, and students (past and present) who have helped to fill in the gaps in my own knowledge.

In particular, I would like to recognize the contribution of Mr. Bill Ross (Headmaster 1976–2000), Mr. Lance Bean (Archivist), Mrs. Lara McDonald (Director of Development), and Mrs. Joan May (Alumni Affairs) who provided much of the material (written, oral and photographic) on which this history is largely based.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to the secretarial and desktop publishing staff at Brentwood who not only wrestled so diligently and successfully with my scribbled words, but also helped put together the photographs that support the written text. Above all I wish to thank my wife, Franda, for the hours she spent proofreading the manuscript. Her invaluable efforts ensured that my thoughts were clear and concise, my word usage correct, and my spelling acceptable!

Foreword

by Andrea M. Pennells, Head of School

In the halcyon days of the summer of 1999, the Brentwood College Board of Governors gathered together with members of the faculty to contemplate the ideal future for our school in the new millennium. Retreat facilitator, Peter Maw (daughter Alison, Class of 1992), enthusiastically urged us to think outside the box. Imagine Brentwood 2010! Brentwood 2020! Although former Board member, Sherrill MacLaren (mother of Nicole, 1981, Michelle, 1982, Doug, 1986 and Monique) has described me a futurist, I am a historian by mindset. In analysing the present and envisioning the future, I was drawn instinctively that summer to the heritage, legacy and lessons of our past.

Two years before, we had celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the arrival of girls. Acting as the MC for the evening, I had sat enthralled with the girls of the present school as we listened to the pioneering tales spun by Norah Arthurs, Ann Holden Duncan, Tammy Torriglia, Sorchia McEwan (Shannon MacEwing). They rivalled those of Ivor Ford, Nick Prowse, Gil Bunch, Jim Burrows, Tony Carr, Bill Ross and David Mackenzie, the pioneering men to whom I had dedicated *The Brentonian* ten years before. Although a young school, even by North American terms, Brentwood already had a memorable history. Who better then to record that history for posterity than the quintessential storyteller of them all, Nicholas R. B. Prowse? And so, on the flipcharts which began to festoon the walls of the Brentwood auditorium during that summer retreat, the idea was born. And on the pages which follow, the dream has become reality.

Perspective, however, also becomes reality, and that is the shortcoming of Nick's history. Nick, himself, has written it! At first glance, that statement may seem iconoclastic. Sacrilegious even! Yet consider, dear reader. If this is to be a complete history of the school, the writer's perspective will inevitably restrict the narrative and influence the analysis. Unless history becomes autobiography, Nick's own vital role in the years from 1966 to 2001 may have been downplayed. And this, I venture to suggest, is exactly what has happened.

Without pretending for a moment to be able in a few paragraphs to redress the balance, let me record the following facts for history itself to judge. Within five years of Brentwood's establishment on the Mill Bay campus, refounding Headmaster, David Mackenzie, hired a young "swinging bachelor," a colonial adventurer from a prominent English family, to take up the reins as Housemaster of Ellis House, then located at the top of the Old Solarium Building. A distinguished Cambridge graduate, Nick was a scholar and a gentleman. An English dilettante, he was not.

What quickly became apparent to David, the rest of the faculty and the students themselves was Nick's uncompromising passion for excellence, and his tremendous capacity and drive to help shape the very character of the school itself. In the next



Entrance marker, new school



Mr. Nick Prowse, 1966–2001,
“a unique role in the
development of Brentwood.”

thirty-five years, in the midst of the formidable challenges faced by the young school, particularly in the turbulent social era of the late sixties and seventies, Nick was to play a unique role in the survival, growth and remarkable development of Brentwood. As an academic, an athlete and an avid supporter of the arts, Nick embodied Brentwood’s tripartite philosophy. As a Housemaster, he lived Brentwood’s residential ethos. As a teacher, he inspired the generations of Brentonians who were fortunate enough to experience “history with Prowse.”

Consider the extraordinary breadth and depth of Nick’s Brentwood career:

Housemaster of Ellis, 1966–1973

Colts Rugby Coach, 1966–1969 (*U.K. tour, 1969*)

Track and Field Coach, 1966–1971 (*Junior and Senior teams*)

Member of the Headmaster’s Drug Policy Committee, 1968

Faculty Committee on the Downey Report, 1968–1969

Founder and Co-ordinator, Grade Ten Drama Festival, 1968–1979

Founder, Grade Ten Debating Club, 1968–1970

Editor of Grade Ten Literary Magazine, *Scope*, 1968

Director of the Staff/Student Swimming Pool Project, 1967–1968

Off-Campus Recreational Activities Coordinator, 1967–1972

Staff/Student Liaison Committee, 1971

Co-founder and Staff Sponsor of Student Activities Committee, 1972–1980

1st XV Rugby Coach, 1969–1986, (*1974 and 1976 U.K. tours; 1980 and 1984 France and Spain tours; 1982 Australia, Fiji and New Zealand tour*)

Senior Boys’ Tennis Coach, 1971–1973

Senior Girls’ Tennis Coach, 1974–1977

Curling Coach, 1974–1977, 1988

Head of History Department, 1969–1978

Director of Academic Counselling Services, 1977–1998

Junior Colts Rugby Coach, 1986–1992 (1987 and 1992 Ontario and Quebec tours)

English Teacher, 1966–1989

History 12 Teacher, 1969–2001

Faculty Representative to the O.B.A. Executive, mid-1970s–1980s

Editor, *Brentonian* magazine, 1979–1986, 1998–2001

Board of Governors' Search Committee for New Head, 1999–2000

School Historian, 1982–2002

Senior Master, 2000–2001



In 1998, such exceptional contribution to Brentwood College, highlighted by his outstanding academic leadership, was recognized on the occasion of Nick's retirement as Director of Academic Counselling when Lynn Eyton, Chair of the Brentwood College Board of Governors, presented him with the Hugh R. Stephen Award. This prestigious award had been established in 1980 to recognize the untiring service of past Chairman, Hugh Stephen. It was to be presented rarely, only for truly outstanding service to the school. Since its first recipient, only six other Brentonians to date have received this honour. In 1998, Nicholas Prowse (together with legendary head rowing coach, Tony Carr), joined the distinguished ranks of Hugh Stephen, David Mackenzie, Dr. Maurice Young, T. Gil Bunch and G. Jolyon Briggs. To a standing ovation of governors, faculty, staff, parents, students and Old Brentonians, Mr. Nicholas Prowse took his well-deserved place for his unique contribution to the school.

As a fitting culmination to his extraordinary career, in 2000-2001, his last year of service, Nick was named and honoured as Brentwood's Senior Master. In this role, he passed the torch of teaching excellence by piloting a professional development program to serve as a model for the future. Internationally acclaimed author, Brentonian Wade Davis, had described Nick on national television not only as a master teacher, but, together with T. Gil Bunch, as a dream weaver. Is there a finer accolade? Perhaps only that on Nick's farewell tour, generations of Brentonians in Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Vancouver Island and Washington State turned out to salute and pay tribute to their favourite teacher.

Thus, it is fitting that Brentwood's first Chair for Teaching Excellence, a chair which will be used in a variety of ways to attract superb teachers to our school and to facilitate sabbatical leaves for long-serving members of our faculty, should be named after Nicholas Prowse.

Mrs. Lynn Eyton, Chair of the Board of Governors with Nick Prowse and his wife Franda as he receives the Hugh R. Stephen Award in 1998.



Mrs. Andrea M. Pennells, Head of School 2001, "the vision to carry Brentwood to the next level."

In choosing the title for his history of Brentwood College, Nick quoted the eighteenth-century British essayist, William Hazlitt:

*The temple of fame stands upon the grave:
the flame that burns upon its altars
is kindled from the ashes of great men.*

When Nick passed the torch of Brentonian excellence, from the pioneers who rebuilt the new school from the ashes of the old to the next generation of teachers, I described him as a "true guardian of the flame." In Hazlitt's sense, I was mistaken.

Having written the story of the "great men" who gave life to the emblematic flame of Brentwood's remarkable history, Nick has downplayed his own vital role in the survival and prospering of our school. Nicholas R. B. Prowse is one of Brentwood College's great men. Thus, I venture to suggest, as Brentwood's first unofficial "revisionist" historian, history will record that Nick Prowse became a Brentwood hero. Allow me then, dear reader, to salute the historian, as well as "his story."

Nick has written a remarkable story of the people who have shaped our heritage as Brentonians. *De Manu in Manum*, may their legacy of service inspire all Brentonians to honour the traditions and accomplishments of our past, to go forth with courage into uncharted waters, and to have the vision and the strength of purpose to ride the inevitable waves of change.

Andrea M. Pennells
Head of School
Mill Bay, May 2002

Introduction: The Reason Why

"A true guardian of the flame."

Head of School, Andrea Pennells, 2001

Exactly how this mantle fell upon me is, in retrospect, difficult to determine. It appeared just to happen. Probably, though, it was a combination of factors. Inheriting the role of senior history teacher from David Mackenzie in the late sixties, combined with accepting a little later the role of staff liaison with the Old Brentonians' Association Executive, which put me in touch with revered Old Brentonian, parent and governor, Dr. Maurice Young (1925–1930), certainly helped kindle both my interest in and obligation to the school that was rapidly becoming my life's work.

In more recent years, the increasing importance I have attached to telling the story of "Old Brentonians at war" to the student body on Remembrance Day, led me to respond favourably to outside requests for lectures on the history of the school itself. The more I spoke, the more I realized that the fire and closure of the original school in 1948 separated it from the present school by a gap of fourteen years and thirty miles and, as a result, much of the folklore had been forgotten or lost. Ultimately, this all led up to my receiving an invitation to address many of the veterans of the original school (1923–1948) at a dinner commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the school held at Brentwood on September 26th, 1998. With the help of school archivist, Mr. Lance Bean, I put together a talk entitled "In the Founders' Footsteps," which attempted to link the old school and its representatives with the new Brentwood. I emphasized the traditions that are the foundation for everything that we do in educating young people and are passed on *de manu in manum* by each generation.

It then occurred to me that the group who needed to understand the school and its history most, namely each year's intake of new students, was still woefully ignorant of the values, beliefs and traditions of the school they were joining. So I suggested that a talk on the history of Brentwood be incorporated into the Orientation Program that was now a part of the school's opening-of-year procedures. In this way, I became Brentwood's unofficial official historian and storyteller!

More and more, as I passed on the story of Brentwood to others, I became convinced that the time had come for the history to move beyond being a largely oral one, especially since fifty-four years had passed since the closing of the original school; its graduates may not be around much longer to pass on their memories and recollections.

My retirement in June 2001 seemed an ideal opportunity for me to reflect back on my own experiences. I could then spend some time researching the Brentwood years from 1923 to the present, and write a short, readable history for those who have been a part of the story, as well as those still to come. If my efforts can be used to support the future development of the school, then so much the better. I hope you enjoy reading the story of Brentwood as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Nick Prowse

Cowichan Bay and Victoria, B.C., October 2001–August 2002



Brentwood College crest,
circa 1940.

Chapter One: In the Beginning

"a college of unique and interesting character . . ."

Daily Colonist, Thursday, September 13th, 1923

The Governors of Brentwood College

request the pleasure of your company
at the

Opening of the College

by

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor

on

Wednesday, September the 12th, 1923

at 3 o'clock p. m.

R. S. B. P.

The Headmaster, Brentwood College
near Victoria, B. C.

Original invitation to the
opening of the College in 1923.

Brentwood is a remarkable and, in many ways, unique academic institution. It was originally founded in the years of uncertainty and questioning following World War One by a group of Victoria businessmen upset at the recent closing of the local naval college. In its short life the school survived two of the twentieth century's biggest calamities, the Great Depression and World War Two, only to burn down in 1947, when the future seemed at last to be free of most of the uncertainties that had so plagued its development in recent years. Even so, the loyalty to the school that had evolved over the short twenty-four years of its existence was so strong that a number of alumni kept the memory of Brentwood alive until they were able to refound the school in 1961. This amazing allegiance to the school by those who had, however briefly, been a part of it, has existed right through to the present day.

I became aware of these strong ties to a non-existent school when I arrived in Victoria in September 1960 to teach at University School, the school with which Brentwood had amalgamated in 1948. Not only was there a Brentwood House, but a number of the school's trophies had "Brentwood College" engraved on them, complete with the distinctive flaming torch in a mailed fist crest. This alone was enough to pique my interest, but also there was a certain senior member of staff, Mr. Cyril Genge, a former Brentwood teacher, who never hesitated to compare his present teaching situation unfavourably with his previous one! In addition, Victoria rugby circles (which I had quickly joined), abounded with ex-Brentwood rugby players such as George Jones and Ray Calton. In this way I was also soon to meet David Mackenzie, currently teaching at Shawnigan Lake School, who, I learned, was in the process of starting Brentwood up again. Indeed, over the course of my first year at University School, I found that a number of my colleagues had already been offered teaching positions at the new Brentwood that David Mackenzie intended to open in Mill Bay the following year.

The effect of this new beginning for Brentwood on University School can be aptly judged by the comments in the September 1961 issue of the University School magazine, *The Black and Red*, wherein the Headmaster at the time, Mr. J. J. Timmis, wrote:

*Many will regret to learn of the passing of Founders and Brentwood Houses,
and their replacement by Barnacle and Bolton respectively. In case there should be some who do not
understand the circumstances relating to the change, those are, very briefly, as follows:*

*In 1948 Brentwood College experienced financial difficulties and, being unable to continue alone,
became part of University School, forming the nucleus of Brentwood House. From this time on the School*

functioned under the House system — the same privileges being accorded to sons of Old Boys of both schools, and the Roll of Honour being called on Remembrance Day in the Hall which the joint efforts of their friends and alumni had built.

However, in 1960–61, a group of Old Brentonians formed a new association to start a new Brentwood College at Mill Bay using the colours, crests, etc., of the old college. Since this would inevitably lead to confusion and misunderstanding it was decided to rename the Houses after the founders of this school.

From the tone of the above statement, particularly the misleading comment surrounding the closure of the original Brentwood, it seems that John Timmis was vehemently opposed to David Mackenzie's efforts and refused to recognize their legitimacy. Only with the greatest reluctance did he surrender the majority of Brentwood's artifacts and memorabilia. Indeed, some of Brentwood's most prized trophies, such as the Harker-Privett Trophy for competition between the respective 1st XVs of Brentwood and St. George's School, have remained in the hands of St. Michaels University School through to the present day. All this was in marked contrast to the Headmaster of Shawnigan Lake School, Mr. Ned Larsen, who not only hired David Mackenzie so that he could gain valuable experience, but also actively supported the project from the very beginning.

Because of this animosity, David Mackenzie was rarely seen at University School during that final year before the new Brentwood opened. Even so, I met him on a number of occasions and was immediately impressed not only by his long list of accomplishments, athletic and academic, but also by his charismatic presence. There is no doubt that he had a magnetism that drew people to him.

The reality of what he was trying to do finally came home to me when I visited the new Brentwood campus in June 1961. I was driving back to Victoria from Nanaimo with a University School colleague who had recently been offered a job by the newly appointed Head of the soon-to-be-reopened Brentwood College. We found David struggling with a push mower as he attempted to scythe down the waist-high grass! Our arrival was an excuse to take a break, and over a cool beer he entertained us with his vision of the school he was building, literally with the sweat of his brow! I must admit later when we continued our journey over the Malahat, we both had a quiet chuckle. Familiar with the well-established traditions of University School where we were both teaching, not to mention the often derogatory comments of our boss, we were convinced that David's was an impractical pipe-dream doomed to failure. My friend even turned down the opportunity to take up the challenge of the position at Brentwood and remained in the comfort and security of his present job.

For my part, though I often took various sports teams up to Brentwood over the next three years, and increasingly met Brentwood teachers on the rugby fields of Victoria, I developed little inclination to cross the Malahat and become a Brentwood pioneer. It was only after I left Victoria and was teaching in School District 58 at Valemount in the B.C. interior that my thoughts turned once again to Brentwood. Without realizing it, the mystique of the school had had a greater effect on



Mr. Nick Prowse's first contacts with Brentwood came whilst teaching at University School, 1960–1964.



Old Brentonian and current Governor, Philip (Pip) D. P. Holmes, Class of 1941. His family's long connection with the school began with his father, who was a Founding Governor.

me than I had been aware of at the time, I missed the coast, the world of rugby, and the independent system; therefore, it was to Brentwood, rather than the other, longer-established private schools, that I applied. At first, David Mackenzie was not hopeful that an opening on the staff would materialize for September 1966, but a few weeks later, just as I was about to renew my contract with School District 58, a telegram from David informed me of a sudden and unexpected vacancy for a housemaster, rugby coach and History/English/Geography teacher. The die was cast! I am still asked what made me give up a secure, well-paid, five-days-a-week job in the public school system for the uncertainties of a reduced salary (compared with the McBride School District, though not, it must be noted, with the Cowichan School District, which Brentwood matched from the beginning in order to encourage good candidates to apply), in a twenty-four-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week position in a new and struggling independent school! Now, thirty-five years later, the answer to this question can be found in the pages of this book.

Because of my close ties with this school for almost all the years of its existence since 1961, it will be difficult to write a history that does not include my "voice." It is inevitable that some of my feelings will permeate the pages. Nevertheless, I have rejected the concept of a personal history and I have consciously avoided looking at the many events that have seen the growth and development of the new Brentwood over the last forty years from a first person singular point of view. I do, however, take full responsibility for all the words that are written here. Though I consulted many people, what has finally been set down is my responsibility alone.

When I first thought of completing my long association with the school by writing a history of the first forty years of the new Brentwood, many former students, particularly from the difficult and uncertain early days, whilst professing feelings of gratitude to the school, asked that I make the history an honest and real one. Although I have tried to be understanding of the student perspective, particularly in those pioneer days, I have inevitably ended up presenting the school's history from the point of view of various school publications, and my role as a teacher, though I did, where possible and relevant, seek the views and opinions of students. Sadly, my attempts to elicit personal memories from former students via the *Brentonian* magazine proved largely unsuccessful as most, though willing to chat about "old times," were rarely prepared to commit those memories to paper. A few agreed either to submit material or to be interviewed. To them I am very grateful. Hence, this is an official history, though laced occasionally with the personal memories and commentary of both teachers and students. The reader will notice that this history is liberally sprinkled with a number of quotations taken directly from the comments of students themselves. Most of these observations were researched by the author from various Brentwood publications. Only if an Old Brentonian supplied material (written or oral) directly to the author is the person specifically named.

Readers will notice that this short history makes little or no attempt to look at the enormous contribution made to Brentwood by the school's ancillary support services. For this omission I apologize, but defend myself by stating that their vital role in the growth and development of the new Brentwood really falls outside the parameters of this brief school biography. I hope, however, that someday a future historian of the school will do justice to their loyal and dedicated service. In the meantime, I would like to salute all their efforts by making special mention of those individuals amongst their number with either particularly long years of service or strong family ties to the school, such as Jessie and Ella Hallet (Food Services), Owen Finnegan

(Grounds), Dr. Keith Laycock and Julie Sorby (Medical Services), Dan McClure, Ken McAlpine (Maintenance), Astrid McClure (Accounting), Clyde Ogilvie (Business Manager), Jenny Mather, Analise LePoole, Margaret Hunter and Elizabeth Sakawsky (Academic Administration), Kitty Johnsen, Liz Clegg, Joyce Rodger, JoAnn McKay (Housekeeping), Barbara Little (Travel and Stores), Donna Kitsch (Laundry and Stores), Deirdre Packer, Catherine Kinhead and Gerri Wiens (Secretarial), Isabelle Deloume, Joan Windsor and Chris Nelson (Laundry), Lynn James (Switchboard), and Joanna Crowe, Class of 1978 (Library).

It should also be emphasized that although this is primarily a history of the school to which I gave a huge part of my working life, I certainly recognize how much is owed by all of us to the original school. That school built the values and traditions on which today's school is still based. In this new millennium Brentwood may be a vibrantly progressive school, but the basic precepts of the school as originally set out in 1923 have altered very little in the years from then until now. The original legacy, based upon old-fashioned, traditional values, continues to be upheld and promoted today. The world may have changed beyond even the wildest dreams of those first Brentwood students and teachers, and even though the school itself has had to rise again after a disastrous fire in 1947, the same high ideals of sound body, sound mind, with an emphasis on the three "R's" still exist at the core of today's highly complex, co-educational, multi-choice, tripartite program. The first President of the Board of Governors, Mr. P. F. Curtis, could have been speaking at the school's 2001 Closing Ceremonies when he talked in 1923 of the importance of a tradition that must come out of the hearts of the boys and then urged them to "put away self and work for the good of the community." The school has always been about personal commitment, good conduct, tolerance and consideration for others. So it is to the old school that we must now turn, because without an appreciation of its enormous contribution, no history of Brentwood would be complete. Thus, the next four chapters will take a brief look at the college that existed on the rocky shore of the Saanich Inlet at Brentwood Bay (hence the name) between 1923 and 1947.

Finally, as to why this history is being written forty years after the refounding of Brentwood, rather than the more logical fifty, there are several reasons, not least of which is the same as that used for the fortieth anniversary celebrations of D-Day on June 6th, 1984 — namely, that ten years later, many of the original participants in both the old school and the founding of the new one might not be able readily to savour the much-deserved recognition of their achievements! In addition, my retirement, combined with the beginning of a new millennium, a new era of expansion and a new leadership at Brentwood, seemed an auspicious moment to salute all those whose efforts had laid the foundations for the Brentwood of tomorrow.



Mr. P. F. Curtis, the first President of the Board of Governors and the leader of a small group of distinguished Victoria businessmen.

Chapter Two: “True Religion, Honest Industry, Useful Learning,” 1923–1930

Brentwood School Prayer

“Establishing a worthy tradition . . .”
Daily Colonist, September 13th, 1923

At the close of his tenure as Headmaster, Mr. A. C. Privett preached the end-of-term sermon in 1946. During his remarks to the students, he asked them to consider several questions:

“Have you always given of your best?
Have you worked your hardest, played your hardest?
Have you done the little more than was required, rather than the little less?”

He went on to stress that only if the answer was “yes” would each student know that Brentwood would be the greater for him having been there, regardless of whether he had been a star or an also-ran.

In promoting this philosophy of what he called the “honest strivers,” Mr. Privett was reminding all his listeners of what it meant to be a true Brentonian, loyal to the traditions of the school founded in September 1923 at the south end of the beautiful Saanich Inlet, a few miles north of Victoria. Similar beliefs, with their echoes of Edwardian England, had been very much on the minds of the small group of distinguished Victoria businessmen who had founded Brentwood years previously and formed its first Board of Governors. The stern but sympathetic faces of Lindley Creese, P. F. Curtis, F. A. M. Williams, Lt. Col. Scott-Moncrieff, D. J. Angus, N. A. Yarrow and Major C. Holmes stare out of the pages of the first *Brentwood College Magazine*, a constant reminder of the seriousness with which each took his responsibility as a founder of a school that was designed “to take its proper place in the life of the community.”

According to one of Victoria’s newspapers, the *Daily Colonist*, “over two hundred men prominent in public affairs in Victoria attended the formal opening of the College on September 12th, 1923, by His Honour Lieutenant-Governor Walter C. Nichol.” Finally, after years of planning, Brentwood College was a reality. Built on the high principles of “True Religion, Honest Industry, Useful Learning,” the founders announced that the school would follow in the traditions of the great English public schools, but with a special emphasis on Canadian requirements.

At the opening ceremony, Mr. Yarrow, a well-known local shipbuilder, speaking on behalf of the Board of Governors, said that at Brentwood College, “great men of tomorrow are going to be given their start in life, and we look forward to their achieve-

Mr. N. A. Yarrow, Victoria shipbuilder, original governor and presenter of the Yarrow Shield.

ments in later years where, as a result of the training that they will have obtained at Brentwood, they will be fitted to turn their hands to the tasks of life.” He was followed by Mr. Hope, previously of Oak Bay High School (where he had worked successfully with Mr. Curtis, the Chairman of the Oak Bay School Board), and now the newly appointed Headmaster of Brentwood College. He affirmed his high ideals for Brentwood College and pointed out to the forty boys already enrolled at the new boarding school that it was up to them to build a tradition based on “honest endeavour and sports.” In this way would be laid “the foundation for the success of the school.”

To represent these ideas, the school crest would be a mailed fist holding a flaming torch, and the motto chosen was, *De Manu in Manum* (*From Hand to Hand*). Mr. Hope summed up the choice of these words and symbols in the challenging mission statement:



*Be true to our ideals
Guard our Honour
Set high our standards of excellence
Then
When your time comes to hand on the
Torch you may feel justly proud
In having played your part
In the founding of
Brentwood*

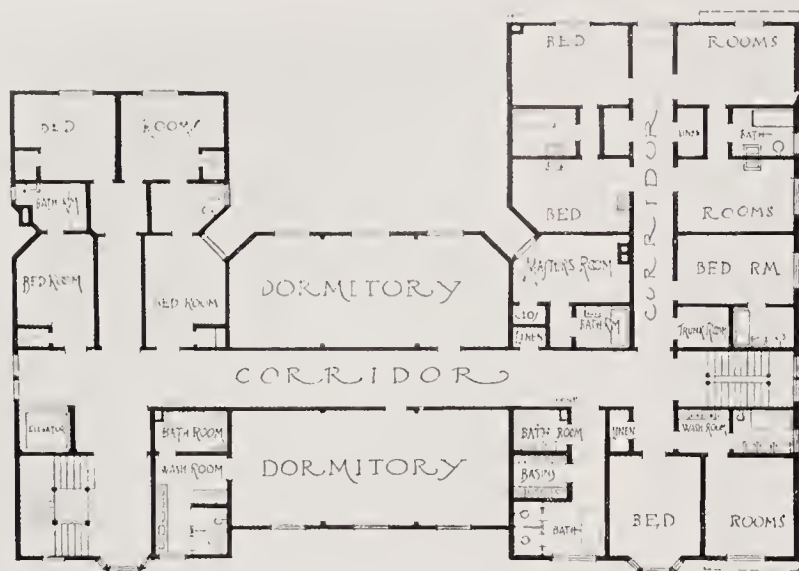
From this day on it would be up to the staff and students to ensure that, through their own efforts, they would establish a “worthy tradition for the institution.”

The fifty boys (ten more were enrolled in the first few weeks) and six masters who now made up Victoria’s newest boarding school were housed in the recently purchased former hotel at Brentwood Bay, which was to remain the centre of the College’s campus for the next twenty-four years. The old hotel, originally built during the economic boom just prior to World War One to offer easily accessible holidays on the Saanich Inlet to Victoria families, had not survived the downturn in the economy that resulted from the outbreak of hostilities in 1914. Now standing empty, the former Brentwood Hotel’s location and interior design made it an ideal establishment for the creation of a (small) rural boarding school serving the Victoria area. To those Victoria businessmen who were planning to set up a traditional boys’ private school to replace the recently closed naval college, as well as to provide further academic advancement for the graduates of St. Michaels School, the opportunity to purchase a structure that was easily adaptable to their purposes seemed too good to miss. Pooling their resources to purchase the former hotel, they set up a limited company, which they sincerely believed would produce a lot more than mere cash dividends.



Mr. H. P. Hope, original headmaster of Brentwood College (1923–1932). He quickly established Brentwood as a leader in B.C. education.

Left: Brentwood College crest, original design circa 1922.



Plan showing the first and second floors of Brentwood from the 1923 School Prospectus. The alterations necessary to change the hotel building to a school with a capacity for 120 boarders was \$5000.



Mr. H. Round, original staff member (1923–1932) and highly respected senior housemaster.

Round. The third storey housed the sickbay, the school nurse's quarters and additional masters' rooms. Above these residential floors was the attic, which contained the prefects' room, plus accommodation for the kitchen personnel. In this way, for a minimal additional cost, the founders were able to create an adequate facility which comfortably met the needs of the new school on opening day.

How the school was to operate on a daily basis was still yet to be determined, thus the rules and regulations that governed this residential community were made up as needed. From the very beginning, however, the code of conduct as well as the distinctive character of the school drew heavily on the English educational philosophy as a guiding principle. Therefore, the prefects, once appointed, wielded a lot of power, but interestingly enough it was the house prefects, rather than the school ones, whose authority really counted. This local variation on the traditional jurisdictional structure resulted from the limitations imposed by the physical plant, that is, the residential, social and academic aspects of school life operating side by side in the same building.

Success for the school was quick in coming. In June 1924, the editor of the first annual *Brentwood College Magazine* was, with some smugness, able to report "as one looks back over the events of the past year, perhaps the most extraordinary feature that one notices in the history of the college, is its rapid growth." At the opening ceremony the forty new boys made up a very convenient and satisfactory number, not only for the size of the physical plant, but also for the establishment of a new boarding school. The number, however, soon rose to seventy-five, and by the beginning of the second year had reached one hundred "from various parts of British Columbia, as well as from Alberta, the United States, China and Japan."

Obviously, the rapid growth of the school necessitated a quick reassessment of the facilities. Although the old hotel as purchased by the founding Board remained the centre of the school, it had quickly become too small to house adequately the

teaching space needed for the expanding numbers. The gymnasium had in fact been finished a few weeks after the school was opened and a new block of classrooms was started after Christmas. The construction of a new chapel by the boys, although dependent on voluntary donations for its progress, was already going ahead day by day. Work on the construction of playing fields was also in progress, as well as plans for the new library (established in the old lounge after the classrooms were moved out of the main building).

The first seven years of the school's existence were ones of almost continuous development. As early as 1926 the boarding population had risen to full capacity (one hundred and ten students, and it was to remain in excess of one hundred until 1930) which made possible the creation of two viable, cross-grade, competitive boarding houses in the main building, each having its own separate facilities. In addition, thanks to the generosity of several governors, the library and reading room was increasingly well equipped. New music rooms were built in due course on "a pretty site a short distance from the main building followed by three new tennis courts and two new squash courts, whilst the original boathouse was enlarged considerably and a new float constructed." Meanwhile, the work continued on the levelling and extending of the playing fields as well as providing them with an adequate drainage system. Three separate residences were also built for the Headmaster and two Assistant Masters, but most satisfying of all was the boys' progress on the chapel. With each student giving one afternoon a week of voluntary time, and generous donations coming in on a reasonably regular basis, it became possible to lay the foundation stone on October 25th, 1925. Soon after, the walls were sufficiently complete for "two very beautiful and impressive services" to be held — a worthy tribute to all concerned (but particularly to Mr. Long and his successor, Mr. Haddon, the two manual training instructors, and to Mr. Hope, the overall director of the operation since its inception, and, of course, to the boys themselves).

The continuous development of the physical plant and the steady increase in the student body were matched by success in all branches of sport, particularly in rugby, rowing, tennis and cricket. These achievements were the more remarkable because, in spite of the school's rapid increase in size, it remained smaller than its rival high schools, both public and private. In addition, it was able to compete successfully at the adult (club) level in rugby and cricket with the help of several masters who were themselves fine athletes (particularly Mr. Cocks, a superior all-rounder from England whose performances became legendary).

Equally quickly to evolve was the social hierarchy upon which the order and discipline of the school were based. Drawing its traditions from the past experiences of both the governors and the masters, many of whom had been educated in England, the school relied heavily upon the British public school model. As well as the prefect system to uphold the rules and regulations, with the liberal use of the cane and/or the giving out of "defaulters" by senior boys and prefects for those who transgressed, boys were expected to stand silently at attention when spoken to by anyone senior to them. Rooms were inspected daily with severe consequences for those whose bedspreads had even the slightest of wrinkles. The day always began with P. T. (physical training) at 7:15 a.m., outdoors or in the gym under the watchful eye of "Stumpy" Grant, who urged the boys along with the admonition, "step along, damn you, lads." Compulsory "prep" five evenings per week from seven to nine (except those who



The Chapel from a postcard, 1930. The Chapel was built to seat 250 and the work was supplied by the boys of the School under a manual training instructor.



Mr. A. W. Cocks, original staff member (1923–1929). His untimely death left a huge gap in the daily life of the school.



Above: View of Brentwood campus from the ocean, 1925.

Below: Anthony Farrer, 1st XV Captain, 1924. An outstanding all-round athlete, and youngest ever George Cross winner.



had a bath night when they were released early) was always done in silence, and a quick and painful visit to the prefects' room was the inevitable consequence of "ragging" (rough-housing) or even talking after lights out. On Sundays there were two compulsory church services, the former conducted by the Headmaster, the latter by a visiting clergyman.

It was a busy, highly structured life, with academic classes from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon, with an hour break for a formal lunch, which always began and ended with the duty prefect reading the Latin grace. The pre-meal reading was immediately followed by the solemn and dignified serving of the food by Chinese servants and the less dignified grabbing for food by hungry boys! Games with rugby, the compulsory, dominant sport, followed classes and continued until supper time. There was almost no unstructured free time except on Sundays, when many boys either went home, took advantage of the beautiful waterfront location or enjoyed the kind privilege granted to the school by the Butchart family of free visits to their beautiful gardens, a short walking distance away.

For today's students, this rigid, exacting, even puritanical, daily existence would smack more of prison than school, especially such archaic and, in this day and age, unacceptable practices as fagging (junior boys acting as servants to prefects, doing such chores as cleaning their shoes and tidying their rooms) or being sent out to cut a spirea stick to be used as a cane on the rear end for committing some school misdemeanour. However, this was a different age with a very different set of beliefs and expectations. One thing is certain: in studying all the official documents and personal reminiscences connected with the old Brentwood, it is obvious that in this small, compact, even intimate society where everyone knew everyone else extremely well, there was a great sense of community and morale was generally high. Compared with today's Brentwood, the old school was tiny and certainly limited in scope, but there is no doubt that it inspired great loyalties generated by strong and positive feelings of togetherness in pursuit of respected objectives. That the spirit of the boys remained consistently high can be seen by the many references to "pranks" that adorn the individual memories of those days, such as raids on the kitchen for food or the neighbouring fields for strawberries, or the illicit trips into town to meet a girl at the Empress for tea or to take in a movie or a jazz concert. Even defaulters worked to beautify the school grounds and the manual training class built pews for the chapel as well as rugby goal posts and the school flag-pole (shaped from a tree cut down near the present-day site of Jeannie Bunch's house on Greig Avenue in Brentwood Bay and dragged all the way to the school). This pioneer spirit that never really left the old school because of its continuous struggle to survive in predominantly difficult and uncertain times was to be very much a feature in the early days of the new school for similar reasons (see Chapter Six).

In those early days the school was lucky to count amongst its number several outstanding athletes. Tony Farrer (who before he even entered Brentwood had achieved international acclaim as the youngest recipient of the Albert Medal [George Cross] for bravery for fighting off a cougar on the family farm at Lake Cowichan and thereby saving himself and a young female companion, though he was badly mauled in the process) was a superb all-round athlete as was Rocke Robertson (later president of McGill University). Nevertheless, one only has to read the *Notes on Players* in the school magazine to

appreciate that much of the school's athletic success was due to "honest strivers" and team spirit, as opposed to individual talent.

As early as 1926 the Brentwood rugby 1st XV had won the Senior School League and, with the help of several masters, the Victoria Intermediate League and the Provincial Intermediate Championship. Although this level of success was not to be repeated until the glory days of the Gillespie brothers in the forties, the school was to remain a major force in local rugby, winning over seventy percent of its games and having only one losing season (the first!).

This fine record was matched by the first teams in cricket (with one unbeaten season — 1928) and tennis, with no less than six provincial singles titles being won (including two won by the previously mentioned Rocke Robertson; Under 15 and Under 16 in the same year — 1927), whilst in 1928 Brentonians won provincial titles at all three age levels. The most popular sport, however, was to be rowing, with as many as two-thirds of the school involved in a year-round program. Most of the racing was in fours and the crews always figured prominently in local regattas, even in the early years when good equipment was scarce due to lack of funds.

Perennial opponents, University of British Columbia and James Bay Athletic Association, always knew they were in for a close race in spite of the fact that the Brentwood boys were competing against adults. In 1928 Brentwood produced an outstanding sculler in Ned Pratt who, with his partner Noel DeMille of Vancouver, went on to win a bronze medal in the double sculls at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics (almost seventy years later Ned's grandson, Peter Dembicki, himself a Brentwood graduate, also rowed for Canada).

The early history of the Brentwood College Boat Club is a particularly inspiring one, since the day-to-day operation of a successful rowing and sailing program involves the acquisition of expensive, high-maintenance equipment, most of which was beyond the reach of the club at the beginning. To develop a worthwhile program on a shoe-string budget requires both dedication and ingenuity, and these two attributes the masters and the boys showed in abundance.

Thus it was that in 1926, Mr. Cocks formally organized a boat club, with student executive officers, to take advantage of Brentwood's unique waterfront location by actively promoting aquatic sports amongst the student body. Funds were sought and, with the money raised, two new fours were purchased from the United Kingdom as well as two, second-hand, kitten-class sailing boats and two sloops. Most importantly a new coach boat was acquired at last, thereby removing the tremendous handicap under which the coach (Mr. Cocks) operated. For instance, in the 1925 magazine, Mr. Cocks was reported as running along both sides of the beach on the island in front of the school shouting instructions to the crews as they went by before leaping into a canoe and paddling furiously to catch up with them and continue his loud admonitions!

With its continuing emphasis on physical exercise as a way of promoting a responsible and healthy lifestyle, the school encouraged a wide variety of recreational sports including polo (briefly), boxing (on winter evenings), basketball (as an alternative to



1st XV rugby team, 1925–1926,
provincial champions.



Brentwood's first school orchestra.

rugby on wet afternoons), badminton (winter evenings again) and golf (which became progressively more difficult to promote as the expanding rugby pitches ate up the available space and plans for even a few holes were abandoned). In addition, there was general participation in swimming thanks to a tiny cove adjacent to the school. (A few hardy souls, both staff and students, even took daily morning dips through the winter.) An interhouse sports day usually held in May was a major social occasion, with parents and governors attending and sometimes even the Lieutenant Governor himself. The first inter-school sports meet in which Brentwood participated was held in Victoria in June 1930, with Brentwood finishing a close second behind University School, but only after the judges took ten minutes to decide the winner of the final relay!

Over and above this wide-ranging sports program, the school also offered an increasing number of purely recreational activities of which the Radio Club, the Aero Club and the Rifle Shooting Club (here, once again, the boys themselves took the initiative and built their own indoor miniature range) were consistently the most popular. In addition, the school's annual picnic to Sandy Beach begun in 1928 and the open invitation to visit Butchart Gardens afforded the students the much-needed opportunity to relax off campus.

Although physical activity of various kinds appeared to dominate school life, the fine arts were not completely ignored. From the very beginning, music was encouraged, particularly after separate music rooms were completed in 1925. Piano lessons were offered when the school first opened, but most of the rest of the music program consisted of talented young amateurs amazing themselves (and perhaps their companions) on a wide variety of instruments ranging from the violin to the banjo and the drums. There was little in the way of formal instruction. Similarly, singing revolved mainly around hearty vocalizing at the Sunday Chapel services, though the school did learn a number of songs which were presented at the closing ceremonies. Gradually, however, the esthetic side of school life began to take hold and prosper. By 1926 almost a third of the school was taking piano lessons, and a school orchestra had been formed and was playing regularly at Saturday night dances (the boys danced amongst themselves!) in the gymnasium or on the porch facing the sea in the main building, as well as at more formal occasions such as sports day while refreshments were being served to the visitors. For the first time, in 1927, the school magazine contained a picture of the school orchestra, the *High-Hats*, resplendent in their formal attire.

It took slightly longer for drama to become established, but by 1928, a drama society had been formed and a number of short plays (beginning with Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*) were produced. Thanks to the hard work of the student members in their spare time and the ever-present and ubiquitous Mr. Cocks, the society soon became more ambitious in its repertoire, such as a challenging and expensive performance of *The Merchant of Venice* on Christmas in 1929. From then a mixture of serious theatre and music-hall entertainment made up the annual fare of the society, and, though the standard varied considerably, there is little doubt that the unselfish and enduring efforts of staff and students in the society added immeasurably to the morale and well-being of the school.

To an outside observer, the boys' life appeared to be a very busy, productive and fulfilling one. Indeed, no one can deny that the different opportunities available to those who wished to take advantage of them were numerous, but what were the underlying virtues and tenets that were being taught here?

On Speech Day in June 1925, Dr. Ashton, Professor of Modern Languages at the University of British Columbia, told the boys of Brentwood that they were “the descendants of the old British Public Schools,” and that the “corner-stones of [this] education were unselfishness and loyalty.” He went on to urge the boys that they had a duty “to be worthy of [this] illustrious past, that taught the democracy of tolerance, of playing the game, of giving a fellow a chance when he was down — but it was not the democracy that threw overboard all principles and decency.” Most importantly, “the boy who obeyed well would be the man who commanded well.”

To achieve these worthy objectives it was important that each boy, “laughed at his own conceit, self-pity, and meanness,” and became a part of the larger whole (the school). And so was justified the almost endless (and sometimes petty) rules, regulations and initiations that governed every stage of a boy's existence at Brentwood, and ultimately (it was hoped) produced loyal Brentonians committed to the concept of “play up, play up and play the game.” Playing the game, of course, involved upholding all the attributes (based on the manly Christian virtues) worthy of true sons of the British Empire. At their most excessive, these unwritten “laws” gave almost unlimited power to the prefects, endorsed the wide use of corporal punishment (many a boy dragged his reluctant feet up the stairs to the prefects' room), allowed fagging and condoned “ragging” and “hazing” (group punishments by peers of those who were perceived to have broken the code). There is no doubt that some students suffered personal indignities, but ultimately in the majority of cases it produced a strong sense of belonging and contributed to the much-sought-after “manliness” so often referred to by the older generation of the thirties. On one Speech Day, the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, addressing the students, urged them “to keep in mind in later life the lessons of sportsmanship and manliness that they had learned during their school years.” The Headmaster also in his talks to the school in chapel, on more than one occasion, exhorted the boys to follow the Brentwood spirit and thus become Brentwood Men by always being courageous, cheerful, upright and loyal.

The maxim by which these objectives were achieved may by today's standards be regarded as harsh and repressive, but they suited the temper of the times and undoubtedly helped to make Brentwood a very successful school.

According to Senior Master Mr. H. Round, by 1930, even though “no school anywhere offered such decided advantages to its boys as Brentwood did,” it was “in preparation for the numerous universities for which they were trained” that the Headmaster and the school could take the greatest pride. The school's record since 1924 in public examinations and the successful entry of most of the graduates into the best universities in Britain and North America certainly bears this out. In



Faculty and students of 1923–1924 — the fifty boys and six masters who made up Victoria's newest boarding school.



Brentwood College, 1926, front entrance "at the end of the driveway a large imposing front door."

the first graduating class (1924), the Yarrow Shield winner "for athletic and scholastic attainment," Robert Scott-Moncrieff, gained a place at the University of Cambridge and quickly won a "blue" for golf. He was to be the first of many Brentonians to attend university in England. By the end of the second year, the school had three students in the top ten in the Province of British Columbia's Senior Matriculation Examination (equivalent to first-year university), with all of the six entrants passing whilst fourteen passed the Junior Matriculation (high school graduation) and one candidate obtaining Honours in seven subjects, a very acceptable record for what was essentially still a very small senior school (grades eleven and twelve). Three years later, the successful candidates in the Junior and Senior Examinations of the University of British Columbia made up a full page in the school magazine. The school also proudly announced that it had matriculated from Brentwood no less than ninety-two boys in six years, with old boys now in residence at eleven different universities. By 1930, over one hundred boys had secured admission to such outstanding universities as Oxford, Cambridge, The Royal Air Force College (Cranwell), McGill, Toronto, British Columbia, Royal Military College (Kingston), Harvard, Cornell, California (Berkeley)

and Stanford. Given the continuing small size of the school, with rarely more than one hundred students spread over four grades, this achievement, together with a standard in cricket, rugby, rowing and tennis which, according to one editor of the school magazine, "has never been equalled to our knowledge by any one school in Canada," meant that Brentwood had indeed already established an enviable reputation that stretched way beyond the immediate environs of Victoria and Vancouver Island.

A testament to this success was the decision by the Board of Governors to establish a preparatory school for boys between the ages of eight and fourteen in September 1931, as a result of numerous applications for younger boys to attend the College. The preparatory school was to be granted for its own use a separate part of Brentwood's sixty-four acre campus and would be housed in two separate buildings giving ample and excellent accommodation for twenty-five boys with dormitories (bathrooms, changing rooms, washrooms) common rooms and classrooms, though meals would be taken in the main school. Mr. Round, who had been a teacher and housemaster at Brentwood since the school opened, was put in charge. This was a bold move, especially since the Great Depression was already having an effect on private school enrollment. Sadly, not only was this forward-looking project destined never to get off the ground, but the College itself was now to enter a period of extreme uncertainty, with even its future survival at stake.

Chapter Three: “Slings And Arrows,” 1931–1940

“The widespread depression has inevitably spread to the private schools.”

Editorial, *Brentwood College Magazine*, June 1931

Although Brentwood had remained essentially a small school in the years since its founding, it had until 1930 seen almost continuous growth and remarkable success. Thanks to an exceptional first Headmaster in Mr. Hope, and original teachers of the highest calibre, such as Messrs. Cocks, Grant and Round, the boys had fulfilled the aspirations of the founding governors so successfully that the editor of the 1929 *Brentwood College Magazine* was able to expound somewhat conceitedly that, “this school year opened well, and Christmas found both our work and games well up to our usual (high) standard.”

Darker days were, however, just around the corner. Before long, Brentwood, like Shakespeare’s Hamlet, was “to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.” Even before the full impact of the Great Depression was felt, Brentwood lost those four special masters who had been key figures in guiding and directing the College through the early days, and in establishing the school on a sound and successful path. The first was a real shock. In the spring of 1929, the hugely popular Mr. Cocks suddenly and unexpectedly passed away, leaving a wife and two small children. “A great teacher and a sympathetic friend,” he had been an outstanding housemaster and coach whose “readiness to share in all our activities” and to offer “his help in times of trouble” was to leave a huge gap in the daily life of the school. He had been one of the first masters hired when the school opened in 1923, and his guidance and personal example as both a player and a coach in cricket and rowing had been critical to the immediate success of these two sports programs.

Within the next four years two other original teachers, Mr. Grant — another admired and respected housemaster, as well as a popular and successful rugby coach and bursar, and Mr. Round — the much-esteemed senior housemaster, were to tender their resignations. Most significantly, Mr. Hope, the founding Headmaster, whose firm but sympathetic management style had made Brentwood a respected leader in British Columbian education in such a short space of time, also left the school. The departure of Mr. Grant and Mr. Hope in particular was a bitter blow for a school facing the realities of business conditions in the Depression. Mr. Grant’s wise, controlling hand as bursar would certainly be missed, but it was “on the rugby field that he (would) be best remembered for his prowess, both as a player and as a coach.” Under his guidance Brentwood had attained, in a few short years, the reputation for having one of the strongest XVs on the Pacific Coast. Mr. Hope’s resignation for health reasons also hit the school hard, for he had been a Headmaster to whom all owed a huge debt of gratitude, not only for the time and attention he gave to the development of academics, but also for his understanding and insight into the problems and difficulties of all his charges (especially the senior students). In the long term, though, it was to be his crucial role in the building of the school chapel that would be his most lasting legacy. “The Old Man” (as he was affectionately known) had “spent unlimited thought, time and energy on the construction of this building,” and by the time he left it was, at last, almost a finished product that had become the focal point of school life, both as a physical presence and as a spiritual centre. Seventy



Lt. J. Grant, original staff member (1923–1932), “he would be best remembered for his prowess as a rugby player and coach.”



Mr. M. H. Ellis, Headmaster (1932-1939). The popular Headmaster steered the school through the Great Depression.

years later it still stands and continues to serve the people of the Brentwood Bay area, so that it has indeed become a lasting monument to the work of this exceptional Brentonian.

Thus it was that in the fall of 1932 the torch passed to Mr. Ellis, the new Headmaster appointed to replace Mr. Hope. Educated in England at Shrewsbury School and Oxford University, where he won both an Exhibition (scholarship) and later a rowing "blue," he taught briefly at Westminster School in London before coming to Shawnigan Lake School in 1927. Here he quickly gained a fine reputation as a teacher, rowing coach and housemaster. His new role at Brentwood was to be a difficult and challenging task, not least because the numbers had dropped to sixty-one students. He was to claim somewhat ruefully in 1973 (the fiftieth anniversary of the original school's founding) that "my appointment was a signal for most of the boys at school to leave forthwith. I hope that this was not altogether due to a preview of me which they were given at the end-of-term ceremonies in July, but rather to the fact that the world had just leaped into the deepest chasm of the depression to that date." On the plus side, the tone of the school and the *esprit de corps* among the boys remained excellent in spite of the low numbers.

For the next four years numbers remained low (dropping to twenty-five in 1934) and staff turnover was high (some had to take a reduction in salary, some were let go), but in spite of these difficulties, the College attempted to carry on with all normal school activities except cricket which, until 1936, was not played on a regular basis, owing to the demands which rowing made on the available personnel. Rugby also suffered from a lack of experienced players (by 1935 there were not enough for two XV's), but tennis, basketball and track and field had, in the circumstances, some unexpected and occasional successes. Perhaps surprisingly, it was in drama that the school was to attain its most spectacular accomplishment during

these sombre and uncertain times. The April 1936 production of *The Rivals*, an eighteenth-century "comedy of manners" by R. B. Sheridan, was a remarkable accomplishment given the high cost of stage and costumes, and the difficulty of the subject matter. A review in the *Daily Colonist* was full of praise: "The production was beautifully staged . . . (and had) outstanding players in a uniformly good cast which showed evidence of the excellence of their training by intelligent interpretations of long and difficult parts The Misses Peggy and Barbara Garrard (neighbours and female imports) as Lydia Languish and Julie respectively, look altogether enchanting, their delicate charm providing an excellent foil to the more vigorous and colourful acting of the male members of the cast." (Peggy later married former Brentwood student Jack Wells in the school chapel. Did their romance begin as a result of Peggy's appearance in *The Rivals*?)



April 1936 production of *The Rivals*.

On School Speech Day in June 1936, the Headmaster paid tribute to Mr. P. F. Curtis, the founding Chairman of the Board of Governors, who had died the previous March. Mr. Ellis told his audience that Mr. Curtis's monument "is and will remain the

School which was so largely his creation.” He went on to mention some of the outstanding activities of former students of the school, pointing out that through its Old Boys, Brentwood could claim to have justified its existence in the past and Mr. Curtis’s belief in the institution he had worked so hard to found. He then invited the judgement of parents and friends on the question of whether the school was continuing to justify its existence. The answer was “of course.” As long as Brentwood continued to provide training for leadership through discipline of mind and body, the cultivation of initiative and the development of a firm faith in God, its existence was warranted, no matter how small the total numbers.

The school had by now passed through the meagre years. Numbers were growing slowly but steadily once again, and prospects for 1937 were bright. As the school started to enjoy better times, the editorial in the *Brentwood College Magazine* at the end of the school year in 1936 paid particular tribute to “those boys who have borne the burden of maintaining the standards of the school through the lean years.”

Now, before the school was engulfed by the perilous years of World War Two, it entered a second, brief period of steady development. Once again, this rejuvenation first manifested itself in the marked improvements that took place in the appearance of the College grounds, particularly in front of the main building where the old steps leading down to the tennis courts were replaced by a no less useful, but far more ornamental set that curved down the bank a short distance away. The unsightly garages that stood opposite to the main entrance were also torn down, permitting the completion of a stone wall that was built into the bank from end to end. This work done by a newly formed student group called “The Pioneers” was symptomatic of the fresh spirit that permeated the college and began to affect all aspects of school life.

The Dramatic Club continued the success established the year before by staging Aristophanes’s play, *The Frogs*, in March 1937. The success of this production, like its predecessors, was very dependent on the expert volunteer help behind the scenes. In this particular case, the work of the Bursar’s wife, Peggy Privett, who designed the sets and Mr. Hincks who provided the light and sound effects, was critical. In addition, senior student George Milligan was outstanding in a lead role. This play, produced by the Headmaster, was a very ambitious effort and showed how far the Dramatic Club had come since its early presentations.

Rowing had an excellent season in spite of generally poor weather conditions, and both rugby and cricket had enough success to indicate that once again Brentwood was a force to be reckoned with in local competition. Results in Senior and Junior Matriculation were encouraging and the emergence once again of activities like sailing, the Rifle Club and the Model Aeroplane Club, as well as new activities like the Stamp Club and the Scout Troop, revealed both the depth and breadth of interests as the school’s population rose once more.



Upper tennis courts, built in 1925
— by 1926 six provincial tennis
titles had been won.



1st XI Cricket, 1937, memories of golden summers playing or watching cricket.

For the first time since 1930, opening day in September 1938 found the College practically full again, with more boys in each one of the two houses than there had been in the entire school at the beginning of the decade. The school magazine informed its readers that “it is with justifiable optimism that we look to the future of Brentwood.” The general improvement in the upkeep of the grounds thanks to the WPA (Work Party Association — shades of Roosevelt’s New Deal), the return of Mr. Davies from England, the school’s chef whose previous long service at the College “had taught him our needs,” the increase in the size of the library, a full and varied program for music lovers, and finally a memorable school dance and entertaining Christmas concert added immeasurably to the feelings of well-being that were characteristic of the school in this last year of peace.

In many ways the period between the last year of peace and the early, difficult years of World War Two was a golden time for Brentwood and its students. In particular, the summer term of 1939 was, according to one Old Brentonian, a delight. All his memories are so confident and positive. “One thing above all else,” he remembered, “was the School always building, always going ahead, getting stronger as a team, creating from within itself. Even the vast flowered rockery, each stone heaved into place, planted and weeded by the unending parade of defaulters, grew into something quite lovely.”

These nostalgic recollections of Brentwood paint a picture of endless sunny days, white blazers and white slacks for those who had earned their “colours,” sailing and swimming before breakfast, leisurely games of tennis in the afternoons, chewing fresh grass waiting for some exciting moment on the cricket pitch, meandering down to the tuck shop, teas with a neighbour, Major Taylor, dinner with Derek Todd and Ian Ross at their grandparents, the Butcharts, and Speech Day filled with self-congratulatory orations. These musings, together with the pride expressed in the heroes of the 1940–1941 1st XV, who subsequently were to go off so bravely to war, creates the impression of a very special time for the school and all the ideals it held dear.

The carefree devilry that personified this “Greatest Generation” and their exhilarating attitude to life and the way they so recklessly cast aside their childhood and went off to fight (“all of us just waiting for the eligible, magical birthday then followed our elders off to war”) is summed up by an anecdote related by this same Brentonian:

“School records were beaten year after year, but perhaps none was of greater interest nor more admired than that set by Forrey Angus. The breakfast bell gave one about two minutes, possibly three, to get from the upper floor dormitories, down, round the outside of the main building and up into the dining room in time for grace. Traditional bravado

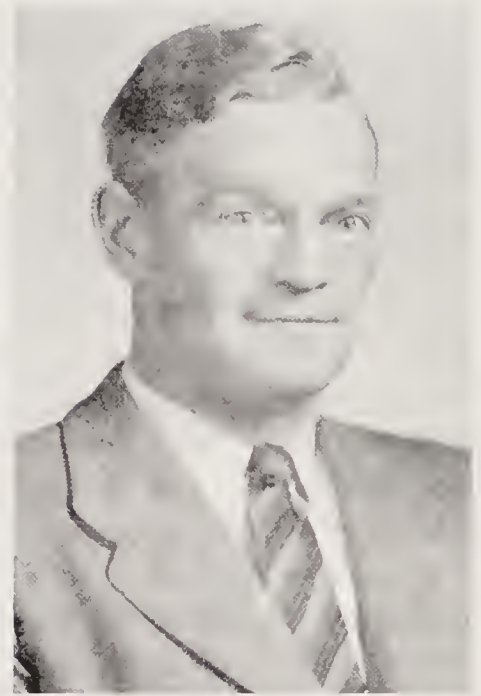
of seniors was to stay in the compulsory morning showers until the last possible moment. Forrey finally carried it to the point where he was in the basement showers when the bell rang. Out, dried, up three flights of stairs, dress, down three flights, around the school and up one flight before grace. Fantastic! Staircase and banisters were never the same!"

There is a "devil-may-care, all-things-are-possible" approach to life about this incident that catches the imagination and gives those of us who live today in a more cynical, less innocent world a real sense of the boisterous exuberance that existed at Brentwood in those magical days before the horrors of total war reached out to the school and its students and changed them forever.

This new sense of excitement, symptomatic of the school's recent revival, manifested itself in all school activities. On the sports field a young but rapidly developing rugby team sowed the seeds for a 1940 XV that would reinstate the name of Brentwood as synonymous with first-class local rugby, whilst the cricket XI was the most successful for many years (both surprising and encouraging, since it was only a few years since cricket had disappeared completely from the school's sports program). Tennis, too, made a strong comeback and, although no outside matches were played, several seniors, though unable to play in the Junior Provincial Tournament, displayed a standard that certainly would have allowed them to do well there. Meanwhile, on the water, sailing "took a more important place in the life of the school than ever before," and rowing had enough enthusiastic support to warrant fees being charged so that the club would continue as a self-supporting unit. In all these sports, keenly fought, inter-house competitions helped to make up for the dearth of inter-school fixtures. A healthy school spirit was also supported by the continuing growth of club activities such as the Scout Troop and the Rifle Club. It was not surprising therefore that, on Speech Day, some three hundred guests loudly applauded the Headmaster's opening speech, in which he was able to give a very satisfactory report of the school's progress in both work and sport during the past year.

The year 1939–1940 was for Brentwood not "just another year." The College embarked on its first "war" year with an unusually full calendar, and "School and House spirit an exceptionally dominant factor." Given that the school's re-opening coincided with the declaration of war, it was not surprising that there should have been a decrease in numbers, but this was somewhat supplemented after the Christmas holidays with the advent of boys arriving from English schools. Among them was Michael Butler, who entered Brentwood in 1941 after a year at St. Michaels, and who later became Chairman of the Board of Governors of the present Brentwood. In addition, the school said a sad goodbye to Mr. Ellis, the popular Headmaster, who had successfully steered the school through the Great Depression. He left early in the first term to serve with the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve and he was subsequently to have a distinguished war career in naval intelligence. This sense of loss felt by Mr. Ellis's sudden departure was somewhat lessened by the appointment of Mr. Privett to replace him, an appropriate honour for a man whose years of loyal service to Brentwood dated back to 1929.

Despite these and other difficulties and challenges posed by the outset of war, the school "rose above (these prevailing exigencies) and got into stride with progress the keynote." Indeed, there was a noticeable improvement in both scholarship and athletic achievement compared with the gloomy days of the "dirty thirties." As previously mentioned, the 1st XV had a highly



Mr. A. C. Privett, Headmaster, 1939–1946. The governors admired his calm courage, loyalty and fine leadership.



Alastair Gillespie, captain of the legendary 1940–1941 1st XV rugby team and oldest member of the multi-talented Gillespie family.

satisfying season, including a win over Shawnigan Lake School for the first time since 1932, which earned them an exceptionally large following of “Victoria rugby fans.” This side included two Gillespies (Alastair — the captain — and brother Ian) and was the beginning of the Gillespie dynasty in Brentwood sports. In cricket, there were at last more wins than losses, whilst the school’s tennis players responded to the building of new stands for spectators by winning every match (this team also included the previously mentioned and talented Gillespie brothers). Although rowing alone, amongst the school’s major sports, remained in the doldrums, with most of the emphasis on sculling and once again no outside regattas, other school clubs and activities continued to grow and expand and inter-house competitions had more participants than ever before. On the academic side, standards were as high as they had been in the late twenties, though of course most of the school’s graduates were now joining the armed forces rather than going on to university.

This trend was certainly reflected in the August 1940 edition of the magazine which, in *Old Boys’ Notes*, for the first time listed former students who were serving in the armed forces at home and overseas. In the following years an increasing amount of space in the annual magazine was to be devoted to Old Boys serving with Canadian, British and American forces in various theatres of war.

Chapter Four: War, Fire and Closure, 1940–1948

“the many vicissitudes which circumstances forced upon us . . .”

Editorial, *Brentwood College Magazine*, August 1940

The war years, like those of the Depression, were not easy ones. Once again a reduced student population and limited funds, plus this time, shortages of all kinds, and the inevitable rationing as well as transportation difficulties, made it a challenge for Mr. Privett and his teachers to maintain the semblance of a normal program. Even so, in the academic year 1940–1941, the College matriculation results were, according to the Headmaster, “splendid,” whilst in “games” and “clubs,” both growth and accomplishment showed that success in a school comes by doing and cannot, therefore, be measured solely by the rise and fall in numbers. Evidence of this can be seen in the formation of the Army Cadet Corps (membership, however, was compulsory), the building of a new board court by the Tennis Club, the construction of a new float for the boats by the Sailing Club, inter-house competitions that produced more participants than ever, and the ultimate morale booster, a superb Rugby XV, containing no less than four Gillespies (three brothers — Alastair, Ian and Andrew, and cousin John), which had an outstanding season, scoring 248 points to only 23 against. This memorable season that contained only one loss (to a Navy XV, 3–9, which was avenged later in the year with a convincing 24–0 victory), and included a 61–0 victory over old rival Shawnigan Lake School (setting a new record for scoring in inter-school rugby), was undoubtedly on a par with the legendary season of 1925–1926 when a provincial title had been won. Like their illustrious predecessors, this 1st XV played several men’s (service) teams (no masters to help this time!) and beat each one — a very impressive achievement when you consider that, from the service teams, the majority of the year’s unbeaten Victoria “Reps” were selected. Memories of this fine 1st XV, coached by the huge “Tiny” Levine, with his famous roar at the forwards, the halves and the backs, are particularly poignant because two of its players, Ian and John Gillespie were sadly killed in action less than two years after their outstanding exploits on the rugby field. The captain, Alastair Gillespie — later a cabinet minister in the Trudeau government — wrote in the *Brentonian* magazine fifty-seven years later, “most of us survived. We were the lucky ones. But some great rugger players didn’t. Two of our stars . . . did not make it. Ian was immortalized in Colin Lytton Graham’s (1938–1944) collection of poems, *A Distant Time* as the best fullback the world had ever seen. He was right.”

It is interesting that, in the same article, Alastair Gillespie attributes the leadership and self-reliance shown in later life by so many of his fellow rugby players to early morning “rugger” practices in the rain, classroom lectures before breakfast in the summer term, afternoon activities and work parties — in other words, the Brentwood program and philosophy plus “the singularly independent minded men we called masters.” (This tradition was further enhanced by David Mackenzie, who was against administrative titles and doctrinaire structures, preferring that decision making be the prerogative of the individual teachers



1st XV rugby team, 1940–1941.
One of the greatest of Brentwood’s
1st XVs, it contained four Gillespies
(three brothers and a cousin).



Lt. Commander John H. Stubbs (left in 1930) — one of Canada's heroes of the Battle of the Atlantic, circa 1943.

“in the trenches”).

In 1941–1942, Brentwood continued to make a name for itself outside the confines of the Brentwood Bay campus. Early in the year in shooting, the school team won the provincial championship and placed fifth in Canada with a score of 1425 out of a possible 1500, including a perfect score by Cadet C. S. M. J. McClean. This success was followed in June 1942 by a first place finish in the Inter-High School Track and Field Championship sponsored by the YMCA and held in Victoria. This victory over all other local high schools was all the more remarkable because the school entered only an eight-man team, but it included the meet's “outstanding athlete,” Andrew Gillespie, who won no less than three events. Meanwhile, as part of a series of public-service projects, the school formed “The Overseas League Tobacco Fund,” which collected money to buy cigarettes for the men in His Majesty's Forces and Mercantile Marine overseas. It was not long before Brentwood led all other schools in Canada in raising money for this fund — a real tribute to the energy and enthusiasm shown by the fifty student volunteers and further proof that the “spirit of service”

was still a Brentwood College tradition.

It was also possible to see in the grown man (as represented by Old Brentonians) this same characteristic of service for, by 1942, over two hundred Old Boys were serving in the armed forces of Britain, Canada and the United States, several of them in most important positions. Indeed, the school magazine in these years increasingly gave more and more space in *Old Boys' Notes* to “those killed on active service,” those listed as “missing in action” or as “prisoners of war,” as well as those who had “won decorations.” Included was Lt. Commander J. H. Stubbs, R.C.N., who was awarded the D.S.O. for his outstanding courage and leadership when a Nazi U-boat was sunk by HMCS *Assiniboine*, then under his command. Dick Whittall, a member of Bomber Command's fabled Pathfinder force, had also recently been awarded the D.F.C. An illuminated Honour Roll was placed in the school chapel containing up-to-date information on those serving in the various theatres of war. Arranged alphabetically, the scroll was in a temporary frame designed so that additions could be added as required. Small red swords (replicas of

1943

*In the changing room
After the Navy game
He said, “Indian,
I've joined the Air Force.”*

*Through the steam from the showers
He was already a ghost.*

*“Live forever, Pussycat,” I said.
“I promised you, you'll live forever.”
We're all immortal
when we go to war.*

*You were posted missing in action,
the next I knew. Your Beaufighter
went down on bomber escort
over the Channel.*

*At Runnymede, I saw your name
twenty years later. It seemed
a terrible waste
of the best fullback
the world had ever seen.*

*The citation said
you'd died drawing enemy fire.
What else?
You'd call for the mark
solid as houses. You tackled
like a rattle-snake.
You didn't leave the kitchen
when the fire got hot.*

*I promised you you'd live forever.
Well, almost. While I live,
so do you.*

the sword of St. Michael) marked the names of those killed — a constant reminder of the extraordinary sacrifice in the cause of freedom made by even a small school like Brentwood.

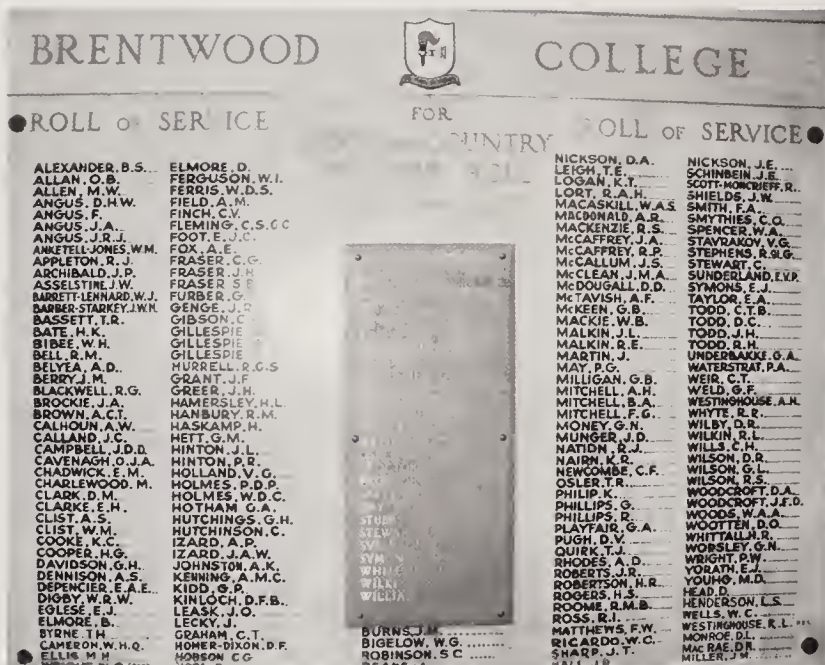
Brentwood College celebrated its coming of age at the twenty-first Annual Speech Day and Prize Giving on Saturday, June 17th, 1944. Mr. Privett reviewed in brief Brentwood's history during those twenty-one years, mentioning particularly the scholastic attainments of her Old Boys, who had been represented in all Canadian universities, in many American universities, in England's Oxford and Cambridge and the military colleges of the three countries. Of the five hundred and ninety-seven boys who had passed through the school, no fewer than eighty-nine, he announced with pride, had passed through institutions of higher learning with honours and distinctions of one sort and another. He also reviewed the war record of the school, a fine one indeed considering that by this time over three hundred old Brentonians were serving in Canadian, American and British forces. Sadly, the number who had paid the supreme sacrifice had already reached thirteen, including Ian Gillespie and John Stubbs (lost in the English Channel in the sinking of HMCS *Athabaskan*), although at this time, both were still listed officially as "missing."

Mr. Privett went on to stress that though the war years had been fraught with many difficulties, part of the purpose in education was to learn how to overcome difficulties as they were encountered. There is no doubt that this was being attempted, but at a cost that was going to be increasingly apparent as the school struggled through its fifth year of war.

On the surface, everyday life continued much as it had always done at Brentwood. To the average student, the daily round of 7:15 a.m. wake-up bell, P. T. (physical training), shower, morning prayers, classes (morning and afternoon, except half-holidays), formal meals complete with Latin grace, outdoor sports two afternoons a week, other activities (mostly indoors) on the other two days, time off on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons (the half-holidays), prep every evening except weekends and chapel twice a day on Sunday had not been altered since the day the school opened twenty years before. The various rules and regulations were also firmly entrenched and the hierarchical system based upon all-powerful seniors and prefects who doled out "work parties" or defaulters of one-hour and two-hour time durations on half-holidays or corporal punishment to those who broke the code of discipline, was by now accepted as part of the Brentwood way of doing things. Though there was always a small counter-culture that felt obliged to dispute the status quo (smoking and breaking bounds were the biggest challenges to authority, although oddly enough, little or no drinking), the majority of the boys lived quietly if not completely contentedly within the constraints imposed upon them. For those who lived in Victoria, there was always the eagerly looked forward to "Sunday Leave," whilst to many more there was always the open door and warm hospitality of "old India hand" Major Taylor, who lived in a tiny cottage adjacent to the school property, and who was a valued friend and confidant as well



Cadets marching on the Brentwood School Campus, 1947. Brentwood's connection with the navy has always been strong.



Brentwood College Honour Roll, 1939-1945. Over 300 Brentonians served in the armed forces of Canada, Britain and the United States during World War Two.

replacing a Headmaster who, during his seventeen years of service to the school, had come, in a very real sense, to epitomize Brentwood. Mr. Privett had first come to Brentwood in the year of the "great crash" in 1929. As the newly appointed bursar, he had immediately helped direct and guide Brentwood through the stormy and turbulent days of the depressed thirties. A decade later he was asked to take over as Headmaster when the respected and popular Mr. Ellis left to join the Royal Canadian Navy in the early months of World War Two. Once again he was expected to provide strong leadership during the "many trials of staff and boys and supplies, inevitable in the war years." Unfortunately, it became increasingly difficult for Mr. Privett, in the face of his own intermittent ill health, and the enormous stresses and strains placed upon the Headmaster of a small boarding school trying to survive with low student numbers, high staff turnover and precarious finances to provide the kind of strong leadership needed for the school to survive. In the past, his influence on the playing field, in the classroom and in outside activities had been obvious, but now he seemed to distance himself more and more from the daily running of the school.

As the College moved once more into what all hoped would be better times, it had lost much of its original motivation. Even so, Mr. Privett's contribution to the survival of the school in difficult times was undeniable. More than seven hundred boys had passed through the school during his time there, and the high esteem and affection in which he was held was obvious from the long list of Old Boys who kept in touch with him, particularly during the war. It was, however, also true that, in 1946, the College was, in reality, no longer adequately fulfilling the role the founders had envisaged for it. Although still the academic institution with social status in Victoria, the education the College provided was now a mere shadow of its former self. Several of the wartime teachers were inadequate, the facilities run down and lacking proper maintenance. For Kyrle Symons, Headmaster of St. Michaels, the best-known private preparatory school for boys in Victoria, Brentwood continued to

as an enthusiastic supporter of all school activities. An anonymous Brentwood poet wrote in 1943:

*Who hospitality bestows
Each week on staff and boys and shows
Keen sympathy for all our woes?
The Major*

Although it was pleasing to an Old Boy returning to the school in 1942 after twelve years abroad that "I find everything the same", the philosophy of strive and thrive, present in the past and, again, urged by Mr. Privett in a chapel sermon to the boys on Sunday, June 20th, 1943, was already beginning to fade. For the last few years of the war, the school seemed increasingly to be losing its clear direction and purpose and to be merely marking time. The enthusiasm and energy so necessary for growth and development was lacking, worn away by "the many vicissitudes which circumstances had forced upon us."

Even so, though Brentwood emerged from these difficult times, weakened, it was still largely intact. The governors however, found themselves facing yet another tough challenge, that of

be the school he wished his boys to move on to, but the reality of Brentwood no longer lived up to its reputation. There had been four stagnant, financially difficult years following the accomplishments of 1940–1941, not an encouraging situation as the school embarked upon yet another new beginning. The scars left by the Great Depression and World War Two were simply too great in spite of the memories of not-too-distant glories and the brave words of the incoming Headmaster, Mr. W. K. Molson, at Speech Day in June, 1946. The “pulse of Brentwood” was not as “strong and steady” as he claimed. Even though, in Mr. Privett’s last year, there had been once again an operating surplus of \$8,000, the heavy mortgage load remained. In spite of a recent revival of both music and drama with student interest and involvement on the increase, and the Sea Cadet Corps (the successor to the Army Cadet Corps in 1942) keeping seventy percent of its enrollment despite becoming voluntary, as well as a surprisingly successful rugby season based upon “fifteen players who worked better as a team than previous teams have been able to for some years,” the vitality and vigour that had built the school was missing. According to a student of the time, the College “appeared to be running on past momentum alone.” Classroom instruction was “very mediocre,” examination results second rate, with a mere handful of boys writing junior and senior matriculation, whilst an increasing lethargy mixed with some cynicism seemed to be making inroads into the very fabric of the school itself. The Brentwood that commenced its twenty-third year in September 1946 under the guidance and direction of a new, untried Headmaster was no longer the school it had been as late as 1942. Its buildings worn down and dilapidated, its leaders, inside and outside the school, weakened from the years of struggle, Brentwood was eventually unable to survive until the better times of post-war prosperity.



Brentwood College, 1948 (at the Patricia Bay campus), the last year of the old school’s existence.

Over the years since the end of the original Brentwood College, it has become a well-entrenched axiom that the disastrous fire of August 1947 was the reason for the school closing its doors a year later. Like many such beliefs, though undoubtedly significant, it does, nevertheless, represent an oversimplification of the truth. The fact is that the College was and always had been a business enterprise. The founders, for all their genuine concern about the state of local education and their desire to replace the (recently closed) naval college with a new academic institution that preserved and promoted the ideals of “True Religion, Honest Industry and Useful Learning,” were not primarily educators, but distinguished and respected members of the Victoria business community who were each, in 1923, prepared to “put his money where his mouth was.” The College had been formed as a limited company and the founding governors had not only financed the setting up of the school, but were also the original shareholders in the enterprise. Now, twenty-three years later, the College had not paid a single financial dividend, while its actual value, primarily because of an ongoing crippling debt, represented only a third of the original investment. The reasons for this situation were easy to see. As a result of the remorselessly bleak years of the Great Depression, followed by the trials of



Brentwood College goes up in flames, August 16th, 1947. The future of the school suddenly became uncertain.

World War Two, independent boarding education everywhere in B.C. was in serious trouble. University School and Shawnigan Lake School, Brentwood's chief rivals, faced parallel problems. So why in the face of a similar plight, did they survive and Brentwood not? The answer to that question is a complex one in which the fire played a prominent, but not a singular, part.

When the College reopened in September 1946 to begin its twenty-third year of operation, the general situation appeared to be reasonably encouraging, perhaps more so than it had been for several years. The student enrollment was up again (to sixty-six) and the majority of the fees had been collected. In addition, the school accountant was now just starting to receive from England the fees owing for the evacuee boys that Brentwood had taken in during the war. This heartening factor, together with the recent operating surplus, showed the school had, at last, some economic stability. There were, however, some concerns — chief amongst them an untried, novice Headmaster and a completely new, young staff, most of whom were fresh from England. In the uncertain but more hopeful days ahead, a lot was going to depend on the leadership provided by the masters, particularly the Headmaster, and the way their guidance and direction affected the boys and their attitude towards the school and its objectives. Sadly, the stewardship so desperately needed was lacking and for this Mr. Molson, the Headmaster, must take the

major responsibility. With only limited experience (one year) at Brentwood and perhaps more familiar and comfortable with the entrenched security of the well-established private schools in the East, he seemed unable to cope with the real issues of Brentwood's everyday existence (in one year he turned the \$8,000 operating surplus into a \$1,500 deficit). He became more and more detached from the everyday running of the school (even taking time off in the middle of the year to "give his wife a break"). The vacuum created led to an unhealthy situation in which the school appeared to be rudderless, with neither the prefects nor the masters getting the firm leadership they needed as they attempted to rebuild the school.

In the circumstances, it was not surprising that numbers were down again (especially since forty percent of the previous year had graduated) when the College prepared to open once more in the late summer of 1947. To the continuing large mortgage from the original purchase of the waterfront property in 1923 was now added a worrying operating deficit, thus creating an even heavier and more burdensome millstone around the necks of the original investors, many of whom were becoming tired of carrying this load. This was the reality of the situation when the College was consumed by fire on Saturday, August 16th, 1947.

Even this supreme tragedy, a cruel and monstrous blow to a school already facing an uphill struggle in its battle to survive until better times, was laced with ineptitude and absurdity. Three masters and their families were the only ones living in the main school building at the time. One of them had gone down to the kitchen to light the cooking stove, preparatory to organizing an evening meal. The time was around 7:00 p.m. The oil-powered kitchen range needed to be lit with a taper. Using a

rolled up piece of newspaper, he was eventually successful in igniting the flame. About an hour later another master, sick in bed on an upper floor, appeared and announced to the assembled group that he smelled smoke. A subsequent inspection of the attic revealed that the rafters under the roof were smouldering. Apparently, some of the burning embers from the newspaper had ascended the chimney and subsequently dropped on to the tinder-dry, moss-covered gutter and roof. Quick action could still have saved the building, but the masters soon found that the firefighting equipment installed in the original hotel before World War One was not working. Although in the intervening years it had often been hauled out during school fire practices, it had not, in fact, been tried and tested for many years. Now it was too late.

As the fire spread though the joists in the attic, a plea for help to the personnel of the B.C. Electric's Saanich Peninsula auxiliary power plant, which was adjacent to the school property, proved to be in vain as they too could not initially get their engine for the pumps and hoses to work. By the time the volunteer fire department arrived from Saanich and hooked up to the hydrant outside the main building the fire had gained a considerable hold. Even so the building might still have been saved but, sadly, the firemen's hoses also were inadequate and could not sustain enough pressure to reach the burning roof and attic. The flames quickly spread through the whole building, with most of the school's material possessions (and those of the masters, their families and many boys), as well as a considerable number of artifacts and memorabilia, being destroyed. The efforts of the people on the spot to save the main building of the school had been heroic, and were given considerable coverage in the local press, but in the end they were not enough. The afternoon newspaper, the *Victoria Daily Times*, for August 18th, 1947, under the banner headline, *Brentwood College Destroyed in Spectacular Blaze*, gave a detailed report (right inset).

Now with most of the College's facilities lost, the governors and the staff had to address the issue of the school's future. Even though the property was insured, the ability to operate it as a school had been lost and the ongoing debt loomed larger than ever. The desire not to go through the obvious difficulties of rebuilding, but to get out from this crippling load instead, proved to be too much for those Victoria businessmen who carried the finances of Brentwood on their shoulders. In spite of the pleas of the teaching staff and many of the parents, the decision was made by the Board of Governors not to rebuild but to close down the school and sell off the property (except the chapel that reverted to the Anglican Church) in order to eliminate the debt once and for all. It had been a wonderful experiment of which all concerned could be justifiably proud, but now the time had come for closure. The many difficulties that the College had faced, most of them connected to those turbulent events that had domi-

Fire Destroys Main College At Brentwood

Noted School For Boys Burned- Residents Escape--Records Lost

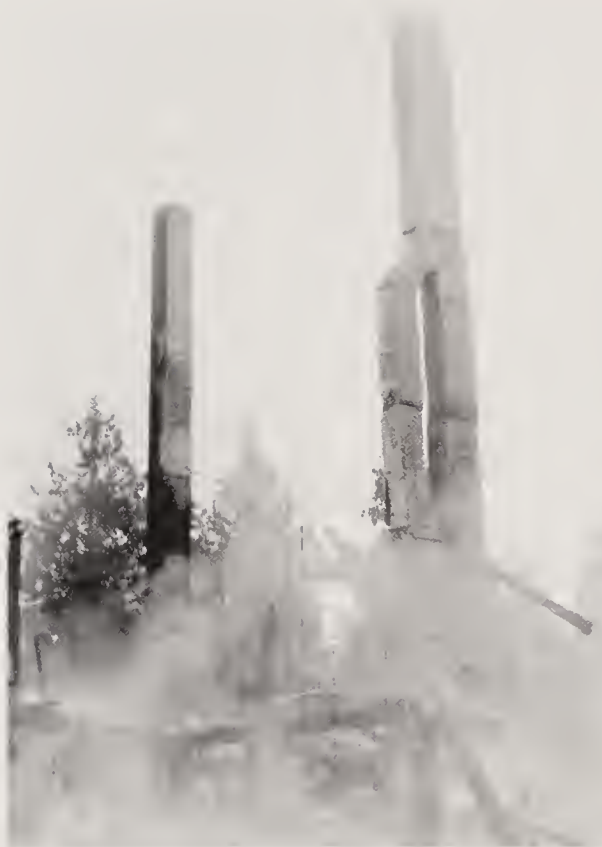
Brentwood College at Brentwood Bay, one of the best-known boys' private schools in Canada, destroyed by flames at 1 o'clock this morning.

The 16 people living in the school escaped their lives but with few belongings.

Clipping from the morning newspaper, the *Victoria Daily Colonist*, August 18th, 1947.

BRENTWOOD COLLEGE DESTROYED IN SPECTACULAR BLAZE

Firemen today began investigating the cause of fire which Saturday night destroyed Brentwood College on Saanich Arm, one of the best known boys' private schools in Canada, and which threatened to envelope the adjoining Saanich Inlet summer colony. No lives were lost and no one injured in the blaze which destroyed the main school building, with the exception of one small classroom block. The loss of the building runs into six figures. Firemen have not yet determined the cause of the fire. Flames broke out on the fourth floor and spread rapidly along the roof and through the dormitories. Deputy Fire Chief F. B. Miller said lack of water prevented firemen from extinguishing the blaze which threatened for a time several nearby homes and forest acres. The beautiful \$50,000 Anglican chapel, overlooking Saanich Inlet was saved, but only after firemen sprayed the building with water to keep it from bursting into flames. The Saanich fire department were informed of the blaze at 11.25 Saturday night and dispatched to the scene all available equipment. When they reached the fire it had gained headway on the roof of the school. Firemen said the roof, two top storeys and the east wing were burning when they arrived. Lines were laid out from the two hydrants, while two more lines were laid out from the B.C. Electric power plant situated near the college. Firemen began to make headway and believe they might have extinguished the blaze if the water supply had not started to dwindle. The documents and files of the school, which patterns itself on British public schools, were saved, as were other valuable school records thanks to the help of neighbourhood volunteers.



The fire destroyed the main school building.

nated so many of the years of the school's life, combined with an untimely and disastrous fire, had proved to be too much for even the most dedicated of Brentwood's supporters. The masters, however, felt differently, not surprisingly, considering their livelihood was at stake.

The parents of the boys already registered for 1947–1948 were quickly contacted by telegram and the results were encouraging. With forty-seven confirmed students, the search was on for a temporary campus, and a new Board of Governors to underwrite the continuation of the school. Into the breach stepped Mr. Logan Mayhew, a prominent Victoria businessman and Old Brentonian (1928–1931) and Mr. Lonsdale, Headmaster of Shawnigan Lake School. The former set up a new Board of Governors and promised \$5,000 to buy the necessary equipment to start the school up again and Mr. Lonsdale offered the temporary use of the presently empty Copeland's House on the Shawnigan Lake campus, where the school could operate as a separate entity. Brentwood College was in business again!

Opening only a week later than normal, Brentwood College started the twenty-fourth year of its existence with mostly familiar faces, but in strange and unaccustomed surroundings. From the beginning, this brave and noble attempt to preserve the life of the school was fraught with difficulties and discord. First of all, the relationship between the Brentwood boys and their Shawnigan counterparts was never an easy one. Growing resentment of each other dominated the shared campus life. According to a Brentwood student of the time, "the Shawnigan Lake faculty and students thought we were ruffians and uncouth, (and) I will admit we were out of sorts." Here once again, are the unfortunate hints of lack of strong leadership in a time when it was badly needed. Mr. Molson no longer seemed to be either willing or able to run things. Not surprisingly during this challenging and difficult term at Shawnigan, the relationship between the Brentwood Headmaster and his

masters got increasingly more strained and acrimonious. Increasingly, Mr. Molson seemed to have completely lost the will to keep the school going. He taught fewer and fewer classes and was fast becoming a "nonentity" to all concerned. The masters, led by Mr. Edmund Colchester, eventually decided that if the school was to survive, it was now imperative to proceed without the Headmaster and, in a series of tense meetings, a legal agreement was drawn up whereby Mr. Molson consented to resign in December, and the five masters agreed to pay him his salary for the remainder of the academic year. Thus was avoided a potentially dangerous situation, since in practice, Mr. Molson could only be removed by the Board of Governors as they alone had appointed him.

By the start of the new year, Mr. H. K. Molson had returned to eastern Canada, Brentwood had left Shawnigan and was ready to start afresh yet again under Edmund Colchester, now appointed Headmaster by the new Board. The last chapter in the eventful history of the original Brentwood was about to be played out. In the new year of 1948, the school rented the old Mount Newton High School building, which is now part of the Department of National Defence property at Patricia Bay (it had been an RCAF base during the war) on the northwestern shore of the Saanich Peninsula. The outmoded structure was cold and damp and it lacked reasonable sleeping accommodation and eating facilities, but it served its purpose as a temporary abode where masters and boys could complete the academic year. In the long-term, though, the old high school simply was

not adequate for Brentwood's purposes, and faith in the ability of the school to survive as an academic institution was further eroded. When it became apparent in the summer of 1948 that the College would not be able adequately to serve the needs of junior and senior matriculation students, the enrollment dropped still further until Brentwood became no longer viable and the reluctant decision was made to take up the offer of University School and officially amalgamate with that academic institution.

Cyril Genge (one of Brentwood's recently arrived masters from England) moved into Harvey House on the University School campus with the few remaining Brentwood boys. As part of the accommodation, it was agreed that no attempt would be made for the next ten years to start another school bearing the Brentwood College name. How timely, therefore, that just eleven years later, there should appear upon the scene in Victoria a young R.C.N. commander with considerable teaching experience, who was investigating the possibility of starting up a school.

In the end, throughout its twenty-four-year history, Brentwood College had remained essentially a small school with a regional reputation. Fewer than eight hundred students had actually passed through its doors since they first opened in September 1923. Even so, there was no doubt that the prophecy of founding governor Norman Yarrow that "great men of tomorrow are going to be given their start in life," had, in a comparatively short space of time, and in a gratifying number of cases, come true. The impact that Brentwood ultimately had on Canadian life would spread far beyond its original, essentially local origins. In many and diverse fields such as military service (John Stubbs, wartime hero of the Battle of the Atlantic), medical science (Bill Bigelow, inventor of the cardiac pacemaker), politics (Alastair Gillespie, Rhodes Scholar and federal cabinet minister), business (Forrest Rogers, prominent Vancouver businessman), education (Rocke Robertson, President of McGill University), sports (Ned Pratt, Olympic bronze medallist and nationally acclaimed architect), and the arts (Brian Travers-Smith, well-known watercolour artist), Brentonians had indeed become national leaders of importance, whilst many more had gone on to lead successful and productive lives in a wide range of human endeavours at home and abroad. It would seem when the school closed that the claim of the magazine editor in 1944 that Brentwood "had builded better than we knew" was no idle boast. As a last service to the school they loved, a number of Brentonians, particularly in the Vancouver area, were prepared to work hard to keep the memory of their school alive until it could be born again. This loyal commitment to the College they had been a part of showed that they truly believed the school motto, *De Manu in Manum* and the Brentonians of today owe them an enormous debt of gratitude.



Mr. Cyril Genge, top left, with the 1st XI cricket team, 1947. From him, the author first learned of Brentwood College.

Chapter Five: Resurrection, 1948–1961

"From the ashes of old hopes, a new vision."

Daily Colonist, April 9th, 1961



Dr. Maurice Young, Class of 1930, a key figure in the founding of the new school.

Dr. Maurice Young (1925–30) had always been a loyal and supportive Old Brentonian. After graduation, he went to England to attend Cambridge University and then, in 1933, on to the London Hospital Medical College. During those years he kept in regular contact with Brentwood through the annual letter he wrote, which was duly published in the Old Boys' section of the *Brentwood College Magazine*. After completing his medical degree, he served briefly in the navy at the tail end of World War Two before returning to Vancouver and private practice, during which time he also taught at the University of British Columbia. Since his return to Canada and the closing down of the Brentwood College he knew and loved, he had worked almost single-handedly to keep the Old Brentonians' Association alive. Indeed, with his loyal and determined leadership, a group of young, Vancouver-based Old Brentonians were able to preserve the memory of Brentwood in the years following the old school's closure until an unexpected opportunity came to start the College up again. In those empty years between 1948 and 1961, it is no exaggeration to say that Maurice Young *was* Brentwood College.

At a meeting of the still functioning Old Brentonians' Association held at University School in November 1948, these few loyal diehards defeated a motion of the executive to amalgamate with the Old Boys of University School. If this had happened, it would have been the last nail in the coffin of Brentwood College, but fortunately, a majority of the Old Brentonians still preferred to carry on alone even if there was only a forlorn hope that the school would start up again. Consequently, each year thereafter, a group of Old Brentonians, led by a more or less constant nucleus, met in Victoria at the Empress Hotel, on a Saturday closest to Remembrance Day, and on the following day attended a service at the old chapel in Brentwood Bay in memory of their peers who were lost in World War Two. At one of these meetings of Old Brentonians held in 1960, Mr. Privett, the former Headmaster, enquired whether anyone knew the whereabouts of the original school register, as he knew of an individual who wanted to start Brentwood up again. At the same time the Headmaster of University School (Mr. J. J. Timmis), who noticed that a larger number from the defunct Brentwood attended old boys' meetings than from his own school, began to enquire in an ever more worried voice whether there was any possibility that Brentwood might resurrect itself.

While these efforts to keep the school alive were going on and Dr. Young was busy with his medical practice and university duties in Vancouver (he was by now Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at UBC), there arrived in Victoria in 1958 a young Canadian Navy commander to take up an instructor's position at HMCS *Venture*. His name was David Mackenzie. The story of the get-togethers of a core of Old Brentonians and a chance meeting between the two exceptional men that led directly to the refounding of Brentwood College is both extraordinary and inspiring. It all began with a tennis match. One day in 1959, David was playing his usual friendly but highly competitive game of tennis against David Groos, his commanding officer at

HMCS *Venture*. During a much-needed break between sets, Commander Groos suggested to his opponent that he think about his talent for teaching and seriously consider starting up a school. This conversation was continued on and off over the next few weeks, mostly, according to Mrs. Groos, in their kitchen. (One of the Groos daughters, Hilary, who later had both a son and daughter at Brentwood, told the author that her mother always claimed that, “Brentwood was born in the Groos family kitchen!”)

In 1948, David Mackenzie had left Scotland to join the Canadian Navy as a flyer and then as an educational instructor. First, he was posted to Nova Scotia at HMCS *Cornwallis*, latterly to HMCS *Naden* in Victoria and then to the Royal Naval College in Greenwich, before finally joining the naval cadet college, HMCS *Venture*, again in Victoria. Increasingly, David had had a dream about starting up a private school, and now Commander Groos had rekindled these thoughts. Initially though, they remained essentially vague and general, with no particular plans or projects in mind. They might have remained as nothing more than an unrealized dream but for an invitation to speak to the boys of Shawnigan Lake School from Mr. Derek Hyde-Lay, the sports master and a fellow player in the local rugby league. After David had spoken to the students about British Columbia’s rugby tour to Japan in 1958, of which he had been the manager, Mr. Ned Larsen, the Headmaster, suggested to him he had the makings of a fine schoolmaster and should start a private school locally, thereby stimulating a little real competition for Shawnigan. What had been essentially a vague idea was beginning to take shape and form, but it was the next unexpected and fortuitous step that turned out to be the real clincher.

A few weeks later, David was invited to Vancouver to sit on the selection board for the Royal Roads Military College. The doctor in charge of medically examining all the candidates was Dr. Maurice Young. A casual conversation about teaching inevitably turned to the topic closest to Maurice Young’s heart, the starting up again of his old *alma mater*. So it was that within a space of a few weeks, David not only had concrete support for his idea of starting up a school, but also, the way by which it could be done. He was excited enough to immediately take a two-week leave of absence from the navy so that he could visit Old Brentonians in Vancouver and Victoria (from a list supplied by Maurice Young) and sound them out on the feasibility of his idea, and their willingness to participate in the project. In all, David spoke to almost one hundred people. Amongst many interested Old Brentonians to whom he spoke were prominent businessmen Forrest Rogers (1927–1930), president of the B.C. Sugar Company and John Pitts (1941–1944), president of Okanagan Helicopter. In addition, he consulted such well-known local Old Boys as Peter Cherniavsky (1940–1942), Jim Genge (1928–1930), Angus Kenning (1938–1941), Tony Lort (1931–1932), Louis Scott-Moncrieff (1924–1925), Dick Whittall (1937–1939) and, of course, Maurice Young (1925–1930). All of them not only supported the embryonic plan, but also agreed to form the core of the new Brentwood’s first Board of Governors.

In the meantime, David had resigned from the navy and arranged to go to Shawnigan Lake School for a year (1960–1961), thanks to the encouragement of Ned Larsen, in order to gain some high school teaching experience. His most immediate task, however, was to find a suitable site for the proposed school. Travelling by plane and car, he toured a large area of British Columbia in the next few months before settling on two possible locations, both in the area between the Malahat and Duncan on southern Vancouver Island, a region already well known for private schools and close to Shawnigan Lake School.



Mr. David D. Mackenzie, first headmaster of the new school, 1961–1976. A charismatic teacher and athlete who turned the dream of a resurrected Brentwood into a reality.



Board of Governors with David Mackenzie (front row, second from right), 1961. Their efforts produced the sum of money necessary to purchase the Mill Bay site and launch the new school.

manageable, particularly at the beginning). As David admitted many years later, “we pleaded with potential parents to look at the view as that is all we had!”

Having duly made the vital decision about the site for the new school, it was now up to the newly constituted Board of Governors to come up with the sum necessary to purchase the property. At a meeting held in Vancouver on January 31st 1961, chaired by Jim Genge, the Board on behalf of the Brentwood College Association “unanimously resolved that the association should offer \$95,000, but that the Victoria directors should be empowered to negotiate up to, but not to exceed \$100,000, but that the total cash payment should remain at \$1,500.” It was further suggested that “the signing of the agreement to purchase would take place in thirty days, but the purchase (itself) would not take effect until a further sixty days had elapsed, making a total of ninety days.”

The next ninety days were devoted to fundraising and, by the time the governors met again on April 26th, 1961, they were still \$20,000 short and seriously discussed the advisability of proceeding with the purchase. Fortunately for all later associated with the new Brentwood College, Forrest Rogers and Maurice Young bravely spoke up in favour of proceeding anyway, since they believed that an additional \$15,000 could be raised from Old Boys in Vancouver and the remaining \$5,000 from Victoria. With these encouraging words ringing in their ears, the Board made a fateful decision and voted unanimously that the Brentwood College Association, “should proceed with the purchase of the Mill Bay property prior to the expiry date of the option on April 30th 1961.” After almost thirteen years, Brentwood College was once again a living entity.

Time was now of the essence, since the school was committed to open at the beginning of September 1961, a mere four months away. Even though David Mackenzie was still employed at Shawnigan Lake School (he even took over the running of Derek Hyde-Lay’s house when the latter left for England in March with the Shawnigan 1st XV), he now devoted a large

amount of his time (with Mr. Larsen's support) to interviewing prospective staff and suitable new students. In all, over the next couple of months he carried out almost two hundred interviews, assisted by Peter Clarke (a local Victoria teacher and rugby-playing friend) who had been appointed Assistant Headmaster with the approval of the Board on May 15th, 1961. Five teaching staff were hired (including a certain T. G. Bunch from North Saanich Secondary School to teach French and Latin) and, in addition, ninety boys were enrolled (thanks to an extensive advertising campaign), the very first being from Nanaimo.

In the meantime, work went ahead to make the property habitable. Work parties came down from Shawnigan to help clear the grounds, and Mr. Latter was hired as foreman to supervise the renovation of the buildings. There was a lot of restoration to be done as many of the structures were without even doors or windows and the grounds were terribly overgrown.

At a special meeting later in the summer, the Board of Governors called for nominations for the office of chairman and heads of the various committees necessary for the running of the Brentwood College Association and the school for which it was now responsible. Tony Lort was elected chairman with Messrs. Genge, Izard and Owen running the financial, building and garden committees. Contracts and salaries were drawn up for the teaching staff, a playing field established and an outdoor area paved for basketball and tennis. The subject of laboratories was discussed and it was decided to hire only a biology teacher for the coming year, and delay the building of science laboratories until the second year.

In this way the school was made ready for opening day in record time. Even so, it was touch and go as to whether Brentwood really would be in a fit state to greet its first students in over a decade. Indeed, years later David Mackenzie claimed that the school was, in fact, "a shambles" on opening day, and not really ready for occupation. There was a bed shortage, many rooms were still without doors and furniture and the heating system did not work properly (this was to be an ongoing problem, which forced many of the boys to sleep in track suits, toques and socks when the weather turned cold!). Many of the mothers were distraught, not only because they were parting with their sons, but also because they were dismayed at the primitive living conditions. Meanwhile, fathers pressed fees upon David Mackenzie who promptly put them in his pocket and forgot about them. At least one parent stormed out saying that no son of his would live in such conditions. Gil Bunch soon rounded up the new arrivals who were without their parents and set them to work cleaning windows so that late arrivals found young bodies draped all over the buildings. In the midst of all this frenetic activity, unforeseen problems in the kitchen resulted in Joyce Mackenzie, the Headmaster's wife, taking over all of the cooking. Not an auspicious beginning, but at least by the end of the day there were ninety boys in residence and the school had officially opened.

The boys (grades eight through eleven only, in the first year) were divided into two residences — Ellis House, upstairs above the administrative offices in the main building, and Hope House (later Alexandra) on the west side of this structure, opposite the main entrance. To the north of the administration offices in a long, low continuation of the main building (the old



View of Brentwood College School campus, 1961. "The buildings were a mess but the view was spectacular!"



New gymnasium and classrooms at Brentwood, 1963 (far right).

solarium TB wards facing over the water) were the classrooms. The dining room and kitchen were below the administration offices (also facing the sea) at the south end and the common room (soon to be converted into a library) was just inside the main entrance and next to the Headmaster's study. This compact working unit was declared adequate even though it was without insulation and leaked when it rained! The present "A" field was, in 1961, still an apple orchard, and the rugby field that the newly opened school used was close by in the tiny community of Mill Bay, right next to the Island Highway at the back of today's shopping centre. Most of the staff, apart from the two house-masters, lived on campus immediately south of the main building in several motel units, built by the previous owner as part of the failed attempt to turn the old hospital into a resort.

To get the school up and running in such a short space of time had been an amazing achievement, a real tribute to all those concerned. In the end, however, it was the dynamic leadership and enthusiasm of David Mackenzie that had turned an idea into reality in less than a year. Now only one term into this astonishing undertaking, the Headmaster and the Board of Governors were already talking about expansion. At a board meeting in October, David stressed the necessity of planning for increased enrollment to a minimum of one hundred and thirty boys, which would mean additional

science and housing facilities. He also stressed that though the year had started well with fine work being done in the classroom and the spirit generally good (in spite of a couple of early student dismissals), the limited number of staff was creating a work overload situation and, with the proposed increase in numbers, he suggested that the staff be doubled for the following year. On the financial side, the need for continuing work on the upgrading of the physical plant, plus the necessity of owning a school bus, obliged the governors to borrow a further \$5,000 from the Royal Bank. Every day, commitment to the success of the enterprise was producing more demands on all those concerned.

At two even more crucial meetings of the Board of Governors that followed in January and March 1962, further bold decisions were made to ensure the continuing growth and development of what was, for all its initial success, a risky experiment. The biggest single factor was money. The building program, including a gymnasium, more classrooms (particularly a science laboratory), an additional student residence, as well as modifications to the two existing ones, alterations to the old boiler house (for conversion to a hobby/recreational area), the creation of house common rooms in the basement of the classroom block, an extension to the existing kitchen/dining area, and increased staff accommodation, would undoubtedly improve existing facilities and provide for the planned increase in numbers. It could only come, though, at a considerable cost (approximately \$175,000), most of which would have to be obtained in the form of a bank loan. The clearing of a new playing field across the Island Highway ("B" Field) was also planned. The governors took the plunge, approved the loan and set up a special executive committee under the chairmanship of Forrest Rogers with the powers "to execute all and everything to do with the construction and financing of the building program and the financial operations of the school." The construction program itself became the responsibility of board members Messrs. John Pitts and Peter Cherniavsky. The die was cast. The Brentwood College Association was now fully committed to the long-term support of this project. Meanwhile, what was actually going on inside the school itself?

Chapter Six: A New Generation, 1961–1968

“A new generation has come forward to pick up the torch.”

Daily Colonist, April 9th, 1961

As they had done so many times during the difficult years at the old school, the Brentwood boys and their young teachers once again rolled up their sleeves and set out to prove that a school's success is based not on numbers and amenities, but on unselfish commitment to an idea and inspired leadership in the pursuit of it. Life was not easy during the first year of operation. Living conditions were spartan and cramped, the discipline strict, the academic and athletic demands high. The main purpose, David Mackenzie told the press, was “to provide good and productive activities to keep the students busy, active and involved. We believe that the students should learn not only from the staff but also from each other. It is important that the students learn the lessons from those with whom they live. They can learn a lot from their association with their peers.”

The aims of the school-based upon self-discipline, personal integrity and the pursuit of excellence, would have been familiar to students of the old school, but placed considerable and sometimes unexpected demands on a new generation of Brentonians, less familiar with the challenge of increased expectations beyond the “deadly average.” The seemingly strict, even puritanical, rules and regulations were based on the premise that the boys must first learn to serve and follow before they can command, so that they could recognize that privilege carries with it a proportionate responsibility. To put this philosophy into practice, David Mackenzie leaned heavily upon his own experiences as a boy at Merchiston College in his native Scotland. As was common practice in British public schools at the time, this system included the use of corporal punishment (which, of course, had been a part of the disciplinary code at the old Brentwood as well). Today, controversy rages over this form of punishment and David Mackenzie recently told the author that he now regrets introducing the practice into his new school, but the middle of the last century was a much more conservative time and most Brentonians accepted it in principle as an effective deterrent in certain serious cases, even if they sometimes questioned its use in practice.

Another controversial issue, the prefect system, and the power the prefects wielded, particularly initially, was also inherited from both Merchiston and the old Brentwood. Again, this method of enforcing the school's rules and regulations was resented by some, but it also taught valuable lessons about the nature of authority and the difficulties of command. It did, inevitably, add yet another unfamiliar dimension to the daily regimen (and the way it was administered). The younger students faced a well-regulated but very hierarchical society with a bewildering array of strange rules that those boys who were new to the school often found difficult to understand and accept. Even though, over the next decade, Brentwood was to become less autocratic and more democratic, the many regulations remained, in the minds of some students a continuing barrier to individual thought and action.



The old Solarium, early 1960s, the original main school building containing Ellis House, the library, dining room and administrative offices.

To many of the puzzled and confused new arrivals, the strangeness of Brentwood knew no bounds, particularly when it came to table manners in the dining room. The teacher who two generations of Brentonians regarded as the major domo of eating etiquette was Gil Bunch. From the opening day of the school Gil, in his capacity as a daily duty master, became the arbitrator of good taste and behaviour in the dining room. In a famous memorandum entitled *At Table*, he published his rules on eating to coincide with the opening of the school's second year in September 1962, and based upon his experiences as a dining room duty master during year one. Arranged under various headings such as Use of Utensils, Cutting Meals and Non-Cutting Meals, Condiments, Drink, Clearing, and Noise, this document produced such legendary assertions as:



Mr. T. Gil Bunch teaching an English class, 1964.

- "Utensils to mouth and not the reverse"
- "All food eaten from back of fork!"
- "Movement of spoon away from person" [referring to the soup]
- "No crackers or bread to be floating therein" [referring to the soup]
- "Ketchup onto side of plate, never directly on to any part of meal"
- "Butter should always be transferred, in the desirable manner, with the serving utensil, on to the side plate, NEVER directly on to the bread"
- "Bread must be cut into four pieces before butter applied"
- "No milk to be drunk at breakfast or supper"
- "Jam is part of dessert and should not be 'attacked' at opening of meal"
- "Noise at a minimum — subdued, intelligent conversation"

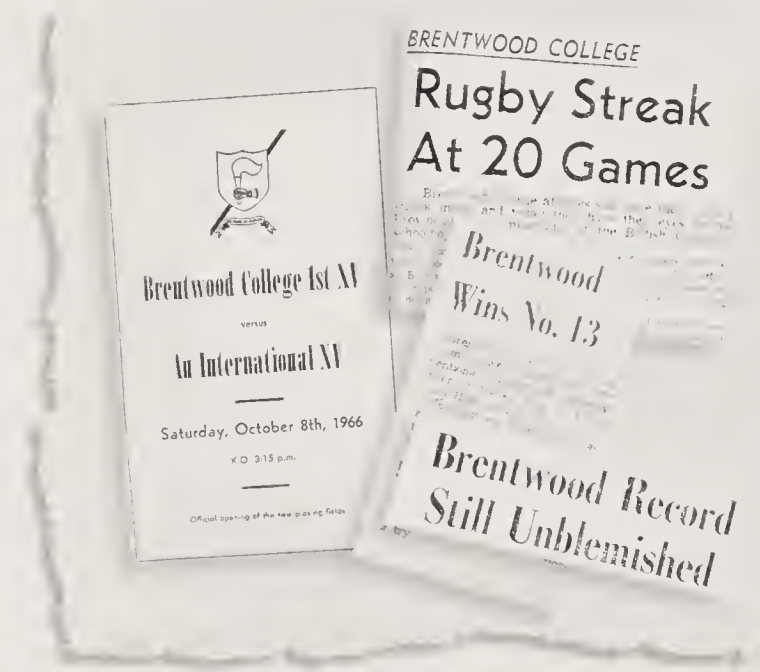
As Brentwood pioneer Michael Evans found out, to his extreme discomfort, being new (Mike arrived into grade ten a month after the school opened) was no excuse for breaking any of T.G.B.'s golden rules. Mike made the mistake of taking two glasses of milk at lunch, and there followed a frightening summons to the Headmaster's study to face Mr. Bunch at his most magisterial. Forty years later, Mike could still vividly recall every detail of that memorable meeting including the array of canes on the desk across from where he was standing rigidly at attention (he got off with a stern warning).

In October 1961, just a month after the new school opened, David Mackenzie told a local newspaper reporter that Brentwood's prime purpose was to provide its boys with "an outstanding academic education," emphasizing the core academic disciplines with the main stress being on mathematics, science and English. Bemoaning the general level of education in North America at the time, he underscored the need for Brentwood to maintain this "outstanding quality" as its most important feature. The aim was to pursue this objective through attracting to the faculty "young men who, by conviction and bearing, offer leadership in the qualities the school promoted, and who will be specialists in the high school subjects they will teach." The classes would be small, with a lot of individual attention, whilst the curriculum would be designed "to prepare a student to enter university." Top-class teaching and a strong commitment from the students to be "the best they could be" was one of the real cornerstones on which the new school, like the old, was going to be built (similar to Mr. Privett's honest strivers), and over the years few would deny that this mandate was indeed fulfilled a thousand times over.

If the successful teaching of the three “R’s” was a given from the very beginning, so was the energetic and determined pursuit of the fourth “R” which was rugby! From the outset, rugby (with track and field) was Brentwood’s main sport. This was not surprising given the old school’s tradition of excellence in these sports, plus the Headmaster’s reputation as an Olympic sprinter (London, 1948), a former Scottish rugby international and, more recently, in British Columbia, as a high-profile player and coach. Like academics, rugby was compulsory, since it was a game through which so many “manly virtues” could be taught, and was therefore to be played in two of the three terms. In the third (summer) term, sailing, rowing, tennis, track and field (originally the major third-term sport) and, briefly, cricket, rounded out the athletic options. And so mind and body were to be honed to perfection and, in the process, strong leaders and good citizens of high principles and integrity developed, who would in the future be both willing and able to make major contributions to their country. These aims echoed the words spoken so long ago by Norman Yarrow at the opening of the original Brentwood in 1923 that the “great men of tomorrow are going to be given their start in life, and we look forward to their achievements in later years when, as a result of the training that they will have obtained at Brentwood, they will be well fitted to turn their hand to the tasks of life.” Now the group of old boys from the original College, who attributed their success in life to the teaching they had obtained at Brentwood, had reinstituted Brentwood College so that these ideas could be passed on *de manu in manum* to a new generation.

This program resulted in a busy, six-days-a-week commitment on behalf of both students and staff. After a rising bell at 7:00 a.m. and breakfast, classes ran all day until 3:00 p.m., after which sports took place until supper time. The three daily meals were regulated and formal with much attention given to correct table manners (as per Mr. Bunch’s published rules). The day finished with supervised prep (homework) done in the classroom block, followed by some relaxed social time before bed and lights out around 10:00 p.m. It was a long, demanding and highly structured day that afforded little opportunity for reflection and retrospection. The emphasis was definitely on physical activity and “doing,” and only gradually were the more esthetic, so-called fine arts such as drama and choir introduced into the program on a voluntary basis in the evenings. Although Sunday was a largely unstructured day of rest and relaxation, when those who could took “leave” (went home or, with permission, visited off campus — many walked to Strathcona Lodge Girls’ School at Shawnigan Lake), attendance at morning Sunday church service was initially compulsory (though there was no chapel in the new school and a brief attempt to purchase the Fairbridge Chapel failed). Services were held in one of the “Sun Room” classrooms in the main building.

In the second year, although the school introduced 2D Art into the morning syllabus, no formal fine arts program was built until 1966. The emphasis remained on compulsory physical activity with team sports five afternoons a week and “work party” (in home-room groups) involving campus development projects on Wednesday afternoons. Meanwhile, the evening drama program with Gil Bunch very quickly established a reputation for excellence with its challenging theatre productions. Additions to the fine arts program slowly evolved with the appointment of John Boel as music director in 1966, the arrival in



Newspaper clippings about the 1st XV rugby team, 1966–1967, an unbeaten season and a provincial championship.



The new Privett House under construction in 1969.

1969 of Helen Smith, who expanded the 2D Art program dramatically, and Jimmy Johnson, a talented professional singer (and English teacher), who became the school's first choir director. Music, in particular, had always been close to David Mackenzie's heart, and he quickly joined John Boel's first school band as a tuba player. Early Brentwood staff and students were already familiar with the Headmaster's enthusiastic accordion playing which had been at the heart of many social occasions prior to the arrival of a more formal music program at the school!

One of the most remarkable things about the school in this early phase was, indeed, the rapid growth of its programs in terms of both achievement and variety — a sure indication of Brentwood's vitality and energy. In a mere three years it had gone from a new school with no money, no buildings, no staff and no boys, to a first-class educational institution that was always full (though often not until August, which continued to make long-term budgetary planning difficult), producing excellent results in matriculation examinations, competing athletically on equal terms with other schools and winning honours at local drama festivals. None of this would have been possible without fine leadership, a dedicated staff and committed students, whilst, in the background, an astute and devoted group of Old Brentonians and governors, who, essentially, were not only responsible for resurrecting the old Brentwood College, but now were ensuring that the growing school continued to have the support, financial and material, that it needed to evolve and grow.

The ambitious building program initiated by the governors in 1962 was already paying dividends. An extension to the existing classroom block at its northern end included a science laboratory (two more were added in 1965) to facilitate the satisfactory teaching of all three sciences. This annex also included a new residence, Privett House, on the top floor, to help accommodate the increase in numbers to one hundred and thirty, including for the first time, a grade twelve class, and at its most northerly point, a new gymnasium (the size of four badminton courts) and adjacent changing rooms that enabled basketball, badminton and gymnastics to be added to the program.

Between 1963 and 1966 increasing success and recognition showed that this school, like the old one, had been "built well." After two difficult years, Brentwood was now competing successfully in all the major sports against longer-established, independent schools, and the influence of Mr. Bunch was already being felt in all things literary. Thanks to his exceptional teaching skills and infectious enthusiasm, as well as the high expectations he placed upon his students, the boys were fast gaining recognition for outstanding work in creative writing (particularly poetry), as well as drama. At the University of Victoria's first Symposium of Humanities and Science, Brentwood had three successful applicants, including presenter Robert Leaf, and the production in 1965 of Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* at Victoria's McPherson Playhouse was praised by the *Daily Colonist* as "brilliant" and "enthraling."

The year 1965 was a memorable and spectacular year of "firsts." The 1st XV bravely travelled to the United Kingdom, one of the premier centres of rugby and, although winless, acquitted themselves well against top British schools. The basketball team,

in a game new to Brentwood and not yet considered a major school sport, surprised everyone by winning the B.C. Independent Schools' Championship. The hero of the hour was Arne Dahl, a young grade ten student from Bremerton, Washington, who won the most valuable player award. Years later, Arne told the author that the euphoria at being the first Brentwood team to win a major title was somewhat dampened by the Headmaster's comment upon their return to school, "Well done, but what a pity it was not rugby!"

The most far-reaching development was the creation of Senior House in September 1965. Following his Merchiston philosophy of boys' houses (residences) based upon age and grade, David Mackenzie decided to create a house for senior students who were not needed as prefects to help in the other residences. Appointed to the position of housemaster was Tony Carr, who had arrived the year before with his wife Yvonne and sons, Brian and Rory, from Rhodesia, to teach senior chemistry and mathematics and to coach rugby and rowing. The Carr family's subsequent long and distinguished association with Brentwood College did not begin auspiciously! After leaving Rhodesia with the advent of the white supremacist regime of Ian Smith, Tony and Yvonne had returned to Ireland whilst looking for further teaching employment overseas, preferably in a similarly warm climate. An advertisement in *The Times Educational Supplement*, and a subsequent interview in London with David Mackenzie, instead lured them to Vancouver Island, which they believed would be only a temporary stop on the way to Australia! Now, thirty-eight years later, Tony still remembers the shock of the reality of the young Brentwood after several years of teaching at the well-appointed and prestigious boys' boarding school he had come from in Rhodesia. In spite of what Tony later described as the "awful collection of ramshackle shacks and run-down buildings," he was soon inspired by Brentwood's pioneering spirit and David Mackenzie's charismatic enthusiasm and he rolled up his sleeves and in the true tradition of the early days "just got on with it."

The new Senior House that Tony Carr was appointed to run was made up of the old motel units at the south end of the campus facing the water; they had formerly housed several members of staff and their families. In creating this senior residence, David Mackenzie was not only attempting, as the school grew, to recreate a system with which he was familiar from his own school days, but also he genuinely believed that housing the boys by grade/age groups fostered strong feelings of family and community by providing "motherly" care for the juniors, firm guidance for the "disaffected tens" (intermediates) and more freedom for responsible seniors on the British "sixth form college" model. This system did indeed work well for a while. In a small school with a senior group that was anyway few in number and with several of them assisting in the administration of the junior and intermediate residences, the fraction remaining coalesced quickly into a responsible and supportive unit.

As the school grew in size, particularly after the expansion in 1969, Senior House sadly became a centre of increasing alienation and discontent as Tony Carr started to receive from the intermediate houses ever more students who were not being groomed for positions of responsibility. This experiment (one of the few from the early days that did not work) might have succeeded if the accommodation had been more suitable for senior students and the privileges of seniority more available for those passed over for positions of responsibility. As it was, Senior House remained too similar to the more junior residences and its members felt that the school had "rejected them." The failure of the Senior House experiment ultimately sped up the introduction of the more conventional cross-grade residences that are the backbone of Brentwood today. Ellis, Whittall and



Mr. Tony Carr, Head Rowing Coach, 1964–present. He created a rowing dynasty at Brentwood.



Top: Flying Club, 1968–1969, the biggest high school flying club in the world!

Above: The Flying Club flies over the school campus, circa 1967.

Privett moved to this concept between 1965 and 1969, Hope (Alexandra) when the girls arrived in 1972, and Senior with the building of Rogers in 1977.

Perhaps the most unique and certainly most far-reaching new Brentwood activity to come out of the pivotal year of 1965 was the Flying Club. The brainchild of biology teacher and qualified flying instructor Richard Nash, it was by its second year graduating a dozen or more pilots with their private licences. Operating through the facilities of Victoria Flying Services, the boys travelled to Victoria International Airport via the Mill Bay ferry on most afternoons throughout the year. A true “Canadian first,” the program was given national exposure in 1968 through an article in the magazine *Canadian Wings*. It was soon graduating students with float-plane licences and multi-engine ratings, as well as the normal solo, single-engine licences. Although no boy was allowed to travel in another’s car except with special permission, the Flying Club members who were qualified could take up fellow students, and Bill Lewis, a fully qualified pilot, occasionally flew his housemaster (Nick Prowse) up-island for lunch on Sundays! The climax for this group, which later produced a number of commercial pilots in Canada’s aviation industry, was the annual “fly past” on Speech Day when they frequently drowned out the Headmaster’s annual report!

A successful school was also an expanding school. To accommodate the continuing increase in numbers necessary to meet the demand for places, yet another residence was opened during the 1965–1966 academic year. Named Whittall House after Old Brentonian, governor, and school benefactor Dick Whittall, it was a larger replacement for the old Privett House which was now converted into classrooms to alleviate the shortage of teaching spaces. The playing fields were also being extended in this period. The original field adjacent to the Island Highway was soon replaced by “B” Field across it to the west for the use of the 1st XV. The rest of the school played briefly on a farmer’s field (and the accompanying cow-pats) on Kilmalu Road (twenty minutes’ walk away) until a newly levelled and resurfaced “A” Field, with proper drainage and no rocks, where the old apple orchard had once stood, came into full operation. Bill Hayes (Rutherford) who entered grade nine at Brentwood in 1967 as a very bright, but not very athletic thirteen-year-old can still recall vividly trooping up to “B” field across the highway. He remembers “cleats clattering on the pavement,” “a muddy, stony field with steam rising from the opposing players with the damp, cold air,” and “the coach (Nick Prowse) tackling a winger and both of them colliding with a barbed wire fence at the end of the playing field.” This robust physical activity, combined with the “sternness of Mr. Bunch” was not exactly to his liking, but “in retrospect it was what a fatherless young man in need of guidance and discipline had to have if he were to succeed in life.”

Sadly, much to the chagrin of Old Brentonians, the school’s two traditional major sports, rugby and rowing, were not progressing as well as other areas of Brentwood endeavour. In 1964 the rowing club was two years old, but “as yet has met with little success” (due for the most part to inferior equipment and lack of numbers), whilst in a report to the Board of

Governors in November the Headmaster regretted that “we have not yet been able to produce the calibre of rugby that I would like.” Both these sports were to be transformed with the appointment of two outstanding coaches, Alan Rees, who took over the 1st XV in 1964, and Tony Carr, who arrived the same year to coach the rowers. Within three years, Alan Rees was producing the best schoolboy rugby XV's in British Columbia, but rowing took a little longer, and it was not until 1972 that Tony Carr won the first of his many national high school championships.

The success of the 1966–1967 Brentwood 1st XV was indeed sudden and breathtaking. Recalling the former glories of the 1925–1926 and 1940–1941 Brentwood 1st XV's, this team swept all before it and was rightly labelled The Invincibles. By the end of this record-breaking season, David Mackenzie had his first British Columbia High School Championship. It would not be his last. This fine team brilliantly led by wing forward and captain, Skip Stothart, was undefeated in twenty games and earned some enviable publicity not only for its successes but also for its exciting style of play. In the words of their coach Alan Rees, they were above all else a “team.” The coach also stressed how much the players owed to previous Brentonian rugby players from the early days, who “worked against heavy odds to place Brentwood on the rugby scene.” The two players with the most “star” quality were John Mitchell, “a dangerous centre with both power and speed,” who was the side’s top try-scorer, and Arne Dahl, an “extremely mobile and very strong” lock who gave the team eighty percent of the ball in the lineout. This team was a worthy opponent for Headmaster David Mackenzie’s International XV, who came to Brentwood in November to celebrate the official opening of the newly reconstructed “A” Field (including a recently planted row of poplars along the roadside). So successful was this feast of rugby “that the fixture remained on the 1st XV’s calendar for the next twenty years, becoming a real highlight of the Vancouver Island rugby season.” The 1967–1968 1st XV maintained its predecessor’s unbeaten record and also emerged as the top high school team in the province. The outstanding accomplishments of these two teams, plus equal success in track and field and basketball, were a great testament to the exceptional sports program Alan Rees had established in a mere five years since his arrival in 1963. His departure to pursue other career options was a sad day for Brentwood, but the foundations had been well laid and his legacy would be a school recognized around British Columbia as having one of the best athletic programs in the province.

For rowing, success came more slowly. In the end, however, its development into a program with a provincial, national (and today international) reputation has made its emergence from obscurity one of the most remarkable stories in Brentwood’s history. This amazing achievement is associated above all else with the name of one man, Tony Carr. In addition, for the first seven years, Tony was to be the school’s only rowing coach. So, in every sense, Tony Carr built the Brentwood rowing program from scratch completely on his own. When Tony arrived in 1964, he inherited a club that operated for a few weeks in the summer term with a mere dozen members, two ancient fours and minimal success. He himself had little coaching experience and had not been actively involved in rowing since he had left university three years previously, as the school he had taught at in Rhodesia was on the edge of the Kalahari Desert! Indeed, initially, coaching rowing was even at the bottom of his list of



1st XI rugby team, 1966–1967, “The Invincibles.” A record-breaking season that revived memories of 1925–1926 and 1940–1941.

priorities in a very busy first year at Brentwood. The first few months of running the program were fraught with difficulties and disappointments as Tony spent more time repairing equipment than actually coaching on the water, but he persevered, and gradually the situation improved. Tony later described these early days as a “baptism by fire.”

The first priority was obviously to increase the pool of athletes, but this could not be done until the club had acquired more shells, and shells cost money! Fortunately, through the original Brentwood, the present school had connections at the Vancouver Rowing Club and with Ocean Cement Company further up the Saanich Inlet at Bamberton. A collection of old, discarded shells were obtained from Vancouver Rowing Club and shipped by barge to Bamberton courtesy of Ocean Cement.

At the company's wharf, Tony Carr and the young Brentwood rowers made the shells seaworthy and then rowed them back to the school. The club got a further boost in 1969 when the newly introduced tripartite program made it possible for rowing to become a year-round sport. Rowing joined the fine arts component because the school did not have the fine arts facilities to accommodate all students on these afternoons. This purely practical arrangement created the time necessary to develop an outstanding rowing program. The only problem was that there was still only one coach and it was not possible to release him from his rugby coaching commitment. So Tony Carr ended up coaching six days a week, an unusual situation even in a school like Brentwood where an extensive and demanding teacher commitment was the norm. Tony even found time to attend coaching courses, going as far as Toronto in one instance. Thus, through the extraordinary devotion and untiring efforts of one man, were laid the foundations of Brentwood's rowing dynasty.

As the numbers increased, the facilities improved, the amount of time to train athletes expanded, and, as the coaching expertise grew, so did the fortunes of the rowing club. By 1971 Tony Carr was joined by John Queen, who, although a complete rowing novice, quickly established a lightweight crew that was not far behind Tony Carr and his emerging heavy crews. With the constant support of Old Brentonian Maurice Young, who faithfully attended every regatta and after each defeat said, “Don't worry, keep at it, things will get better,” Brentwood crews slowly began to sample the sweet taste of success. The breakout year was 1971. With a popular and enthusiastic captain in the person of Greg Hood, and an exceptional group of grade elevens who the following year would form the nucleus of the famous “Crew of 72,” Brentwood defeated perennial high school rowing leader Shawnigan Lake School for the first time. The journey to recognition and renown had begun.



Bill Holmes, recipient of the Governor General's Silver Medal in 1969 for the top academic student in B.C.

This emerging recognition across British Columbia in the sports arena was matched by a very favourable appraisal of the school's academic teaching by the Centre for the Study of Administration in Education led by Dr. Downey of UBC. With a research staff of seven, the team spent a week in the school looking into all aspects of Brentwood's academic syllabus and the way in which it was delivered. The so-called Downey Report was published in May 1967 and was immediately made available (in abbreviated form) to parents and other interested parties. The report was both thorough and positive in terms of the quality of instruction, but it did recommend upgraded and improved facilities and a broader educational program, both of which it was felt were necessary if the school was to continue to deliver a top-class product. By 1969, the school was validating Dr. Downey's encouraging report and consistently achieving a 100% success rate in the provincial exams. Also, an increasing number of boys were winning provincial scholarships, in particular Bill Holmes who, in 1969, won the Governor

General's Silver Medal as the top student in B.C. in the Department of Education examinations, with a 99% average. This confirmed what the staff, Headmaster and Board of Governors already knew, namely that Brentwood had, in a remarkably short time, fulfilled the hopes and aspirations of all those who had supported the venture from the very beginning.

Further proof (if indeed it were needed) of the young school's vitality and strength could be seen in two other enterprising (and often risky!) undertakings that took place in 1968 under the guidance and direction of the young staff. The first was the Swimming Pool Project, the second the Brentwood Brigade. The former was launched in early October when a staff/student committee, under the chairmanship of Nick Prowse, was set up to build a school swimming pool. Various fundraising projects were organized, including a student raffle, a walkathon around Shawnigan Lake and a "workathon" (volunteer labour, working for financial contributions from parents and friends of the school, to build a recreation trail for the people of Mill Bay along the millstream) under the direction of foreman and fellow teacher, Jim Burrows. So successful were these efforts (including a memorable day when Duncan was flooded with raffle ticket sellers dressed in their "number ones" going door to door!), that, in May 1969, a backhoe came and dug a huge hole behind Whittall House and the rest, as they say, is history. This pool, built by and for the students, was to remain an important and integral part of campus life for the next thirty years before the building of the new Rogers House in 1999 necessitated its destruction.

The second ambitious undertaking launched at this time was the expedition to the "Headless Valley" of the Nahanni River by the Brentwood Brigade. Starting as a gleam in the eye of recently arrived social studies teacher Barry du Temple in 1967, who wanted his senior Canadian History classes to actually experience the life of Canada's early voyageurs, it evolved into a plan to paddle two historical fur trading *canots du maitre* replicas from Fort Nelson in northern B.C. to Fort Providence, N.W.T. along such rivers as the Liard, the Nahanni and the Mackenzie. Under the heading, "Thrilling Canoe Saga Recounted by Brentwood School Voyageurs" the *Victoria Times* of August 12th, 1968 gave a detailed and exciting account of this epic journey into Canada's northern wilderness which none of the fourteen participants would ever forget. In thirty-one days they covered 685 miles of challenging water on three of Canada's greatest rivers! In every way these two inspirational endeavours were symptomatic of the restless energy and enthusiasm that emanated from the youthful teachers and so many of their young charges at that time. In a very real sense, they were the builders of today's Brentwood. The school owes them much.

In the meantime, during these exciting and challenging years, as Brentwood struggled to establish a niche for itself alongside the other, longer-established B.C. independent schools, what was everyday life like for the ordinary Brentwood student? How did he react to the demands of a rigorous program, and an educational philosophy that was essentially traditional and conservative during the decade of the 1960s that was filled with questioning and uncertainty and permeated with the outside world's incipient revolution?



Brentwood's Nahanni River Expedition (1968) training on the Cowichan River.



One of Mr. Prowse's many camping/surfing trips to Long Beach in the 1960s.

Amazingly enough, when Brentwood pioneers from those early days are asked to recall their experiences, it is not the strict, even harsh, discipline and spartan living conditions they first recall, but rather the spirit of camaraderie that infused everything that happened on campus. In a recent meeting with four veterans from the sixties (one teacher and three students), the author was impressed by the excitement and enthusiasm in their voices as they recalled events that happened almost four decades ago. It was still possible to sense that special feeling that goes with being part of something new and dynamic. The former students stressed the energy and enthusiasm of the young teachers who gave so freely of their time, the smallness of a school in which everyone knew everyone else, and which made possible the close relationships that created such a strong sense of community. Although cliques existed (particularly the "jock" ones associated with rugby) and there was some hazing and bullying as well as the occasional abuse of authority, there was also a sense that each student, regardless of ability, was playing his part in building success for the school. Similarly, the teacher talked of the dynamic and charismatic leadership of David Mackenzie and the feeling that each teacher was fully committed to the young, eternally opti-

mistic Headmaster's philosophy and was prepared to do his part and a lot more to ensure that the school continued to grow and develop. This missionary zeal produced a dedicated staff that put in long hours as teachers, coaches, house parents, bus drivers, electricians, janitors, dutymasters (every three days), stage builders, actors and even musicians. The teachers and the students fed off each other, generating the high-pressure intensity and fervour that was so characteristic of those early days. It was not unusual, after a long, hard day, for staff and students to gather in the gym for a game of murderball (or the equivalent) at nine o'clock at night.

This youthful exuberance that built the school, based upon mutual respect and trust, sadly began to lessen when the outside world, in the form of the sixties' drug culture, infiltrated the school near the end of the decade. For the staff it raised questions about the students' loyalty to their ideas and beliefs, for the students it produced the first feelings of a "generation gap" and the distrust that this implied. Initially the school's isolated, rural and cloistered situation had shielded it from the social and moral revolution affecting North America's teenagers beyond the school gates. In the spring of 1969, however, an incident took place that brought sharply into focus the challenging questions that were now confronting North American society. The boys increasingly were being exposed to drugs, particularly marijuana, during weekends and holidays, but the campus was still, in fact, relatively free of illegal substance abuse at this time. Even so, when the school authorities inadvertently intercepted a student letter confirming marijuana usage on campus, the reaction was swift and firm. Some of the boys who were involved felt (and still do today) that, either out of fear or ignorance, the masters over-reacted, particularly as a subsequent search revealed nothing. There is no doubt that this incident did adversely affect the precious student/teacher relationship on which so much of the success of the school had been built. Nevertheless, in the long run, this event forced Brentwood to confront early on one of the most challenging educational issues of our time. Before the damage caused by this clash of values could be completely repaired, the school went through a period of rapid expansion in 1969 which further eroded the cozy intimacy of those early days. It probably would not have been possible to preserve this unique and rather innocent pioneering spirit much longer anyway, and the period of adjustment that followed was all part of the school's evolution.

In assessing the changes we must remember that in North America, particularly the United States, the sixties were a time of social ferment. The protests against the Vietnam War and the advent of “flower power” and the drug culture were beginning to produce questions about many of society’s old traditions and beliefs, as well as those upon which the new Brentwood had been founded. The stresses and strains of the daily routine and the creed around which it was built provided a considerable challenge for many of the Brentwood students at any time, but they were considerably exacerbated by what was happening in the world outside the school gates. To ignore these real “flesh and blood” issues would constitute a disservice to the many Brentonians who lived through them and helped, either directly or indirectly, to build a better, stronger Brentwood as a result of them.

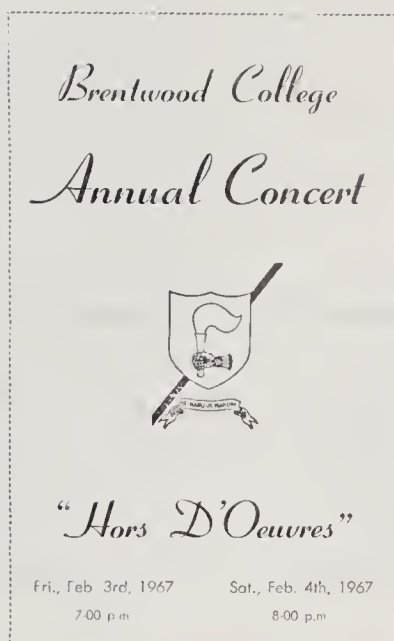
Brentwood College, because it was very young and therefore perhaps more open to new ideas, came through those turbulent years in better shape than many similar educational institutions. This in itself is a tribute to the teachers and students who, together, faced the challenging questions which ultimately helped to forge a unique Brentwood identity as a result of those difficult and controversial times.

At the beginning of the decade, in Brentwood’s earliest years, the lack of amenities and money resulted in an austere, plain existence in which many of today’s “taken for granted” luxuries simply did not exist. The boys’ residences consisted of three-to-five-person dormitories in which each individual had a bed and footlocker with a communal clothes closet. Personal items were kept to a minimum and any wall decorations were tightly controlled. These rooms were designed for sleeping only. Initially, none of the houses had common rooms (social areas) and, when eventually some houses introduced them, they were slow to get even a TV (the first appeared in 1964), yet alone pool tables, comfortable furniture, and kitchenettes. In addition, because of the previous use and age of the original buildings, none were custom designed for the role they were now asked to play and many were inadequate and in a poor state of repair. Hot water was unreliable and Wednesday afternoons were devoted to compulsory Work Parties by home-room groups (until 1966), through which the students became responsible for various projects that upgraded the campus in which they lived. Many of these early Pioneers (as they always identified themselves with justifiable pride) still talk today of clearing the bush behind the old boiler house and picking rocks off the sports fields.

This simple, hardy lifestyle was made tougher still by the school’s code of discipline, which in many respects harkened back to the British public school system of a previous generation. Conformity was the order of the day. Everything was regulated. Classes, meals and assemblies were formal occasions and were entered in silence. Prep in the evening was also a period of silent study. Games were compulsory with little or no choice available. Cultural, artistic options were introduced only very gradually. The dress code consisting of a smart dress (today’s No. 1s) and a daily dress of grey worsted pants, grey shirt, grey socks and grey sweater with black, lace-up shoes, accompanied by a short haircut was rigorously enforced. The daily routine was highly regimented, with a daily duty master directing and managing each phase of the school’s procedures from the lineup for breakfast at 7:30 a.m. (student rooms in the houses had already been cleaned and inspected by this time) until bedtime. He was assisted by the prefects, who were largely responsible for enforcing the rules (correct dress, appropriate behaviour, silent study during prep, and so forth); miscreants were reported to the duty master. The power to punish lay primarily with



In the earliest years the lack of amenities resulted in an austere existence.



Program for school review, *Hors D'Oeuvres*, 1967 — the first of Ivor Ford's famous staff/student reviews.

the teachers and could involve the use of the cane (for serious offenses such as stealing), but more commonly detentions for academic offenses and the running shoe or paddle on the backside for less grave daily misdemeanours such as talking in prep. The power of the prefects, however (though severely limited, particularly in comparison with other similar schools), and the way they used the authority the school gave them, was to become an increasingly contentious issue over the years, leading ultimately to a gradual change in approach over the next decade, as pressure for new concepts of discipline came from both without and within the school itself. In the meantime, the authoritative (even militaristic) way in which the school was run occasionally led to morale problems, particularly in the wet and wintry second term. These unsettling difficulties often manifested themselves in students running away. To offset these occurrences and develop a sense of community, the first annual school concert was held in the gymnasium in the spring of 1964. Entertainment was provided by home-room groups, each led by a teacher and varied from poetry reading to gymnastics displays, but usually involved skits of various kinds and musical groups (from folk to rock). In addition to organizing these concerts, the teachers were expected to present skits as well. Mike Walter, who entered the school as a grade eight student in 1965, still today has fond memories of his first spring concert. In particular he remembers the grade eight skit "initiated, inspired and written" by their English teacher, John Fraser. The play was set in a classroom in the year 2000! Books were not allowed in the post-World War Three era and everyone was dominated by the disembodied voice of Big Brother (Phil Ross) who controlled the life and death of the students! More than the vignette itself, Mike recalls the huge respect all the grade eights developed for their teacher as they worked together to prepare for the concert, and this essentially was what these spring concerts were all about. Over the years these annual reviews not only proved to be immensely popular, but also became progressively more sophisticated, culminating in the famous music-hall shows written and produced by Ivor Ford in the seventies. The first of these, *Hors d'Oeuvres* (the work of

Ivor Ford, Gil Bunch and Alan Rees) was presented to the public in 1967 and was followed in 1968 by the musical review, *Here and There*, for which Ivor was composer, lyricist and director. All teachers and students were involved, whether it was in acting, singing, building scenery, making props or doing makeup. A fine tradition of total participation was established and, for the student performers, there was the opportunity to parody the teachers, the school and themselves. As they were always taken in good heart by both groups, these unique shows did a lot to foster good teacher-student relations which, in spite of a few bumps along the way, were always a hallmark of Brentwood.

The further development of this special relationship between teacher and student was also fostered by an increase in the variety of special activities offered by a young, enthusiastic staff that helped break up the relentless similarity of the regular routine. In particular, the advent of the Scuba Club and the Swimming Club furnished much-needed recreational opportunities. In addition, the Ski Club sponsored weekend trips to Forbidden Plateau, and the Camping Club provided the students with the opportunity to try out their surfing skills at Long Beach on Vancouver Island's rugged west coast. Both provided a welcome chance to get away from the campus and the regular school routine. (The last two owed their success in large part to the enthusiasm of student Peter Moodie and the support of teacher Nick Prowse.)

Other special highlights of this period that were a portent of things to come were provided by the Rowing Club and the Drama Club. In rowing, coach Tony Carr produced the first of his many nationally recognized oarsmen, when grade eleven

sculler, Joel Cotter, was selected to represent B.C. at the Canada Summer Games. Meanwhile, the same summer (1969), Gil Bunch directed the first of his many daring and unusual epics, *Billy Budd*, with the lead played by senior Geoff Bowes, who was later to go on to a successful career in Canadian theatre and Hollywood movies. The most extraordinary and revolutionary aspect of this production was the director's successful attempt to turn the school gymnasium into an eighteenth-century British man-of-war. Although this realistic set made for cramped seating for the audience, the atmosphere was electric and it highlighted Gil Bunch's amazing ability to utilize even the most unpromising of venues.

This was the Brentwood that had to face the new uncharted world of the sixties. Social protest was in the air; "make love not war" and the hippie culture soon infiltrated the corridors of the school, mostly in the form of popular songs of dissent, long hair and, sometimes, drugs. Smoking and drinking were also two social issues that the school had had to deal with since its opening. In both cases, a perceived ambivalence in attitude on the part of the school too often led to feelings of cynicism on the part of some students. Alcohol consumption (as opposed to supplying, which resulted in suspension or even expulsion) was punished by a complicated system of fines and community work (in the school kitchen for instance), which was too often open to abuse, whilst the practice of occasionally serving alcohol to some senior students in the houses of house staff led to feelings of inconsistency and discrimination amongst those not invited. Similarly with regard to smoking, a school policy which allowed older students to smoke in a designated area, providing they had parental permission, but the punishment of the younger ones largely through the use of the much-disliked and often misused "sheet" (to be signed by a prefect every fifteen minutes), again resulted in some feelings of unfairness and bias. In an age of popular protest rather than the acceptance of the *status quo*, it was easy for student dissatisfaction over these two common social issues to grow completely out of proportion in the closed community that was Brentwood College! Even so, both these offenses and their forms of punishment were still a largely accepted part of the school's disciplinary structure in the late sixties. Only in the seventies did they become truly contentious. Indeed, the readiness with which both staff and students accepted the "water-bombing" incident in 1968, and allowed it to pass freely into school folklore, is indicative of their ease and familiarity with the "rules of the game." The Headmaster himself later related the story to the press in a farewell article in the *Cowichan Leader* on November 13th, 1973, entitled *Headmaster Recalls Past Accomplishments*. As can be seen, he related it with obvious relish, which says a lot about him and his school. After discussing the founding and development of Brentwood, the article went on:

"The most vivid of Mackenzie's recollections after fifteen years at Brentwood are happy ones. He recalled one of the more entertaining ones. 'When I was a navy pilot I flew at Pat Bay with another chap,' said Mackenzie. 'He left the navy at the same time I did and started a water-bomber service.'

The water bomber pilot whose son was enrolled at Brentwood (Craig Davidson, then in grade twelve), telephoned Mackenzie and offered to stage a water-bombing demonstration for the students. It was agreed that the spectacle should be a surprise, so students were given no advance warning. On the appointed day the flier swooped down over Mill Bay, picked up a load of water and headed inland obviously intending to dump the load on a particular clump of trees near the school (to be exact the



School production of *Billy Budd*, 1969, starring Geoff Bowes (right) in the title role.



"Water-bombing incident," 1968.

bush area immediately north of the old main building). 'Unfortunately,' said Mackenzie, 'the clump of trees was a favourite smoking spot for some of the boys.' (Smoking is strictly against the rules at Brentwood.)

'I thought someone would be killed. To my intense relief, he dropped the water just before the trees but lots of spray and mist carried on into the clump. A few minutes later a half dozen young rascals came out, drenched to the skin and looking very miserable indeed!'

In the days following this incident, dramatically caught on film by grade ten student Phil Ross, David Mackenzie was very careful to spread the rumour that the 'bombing raid' had been laid on as a last resort to counter the school's 'smoking problem'!

Nothing, though, prepared Brentwood for the advent of the drug culture and its social manifestations. Unlike many schools, some of whom unwisely claimed not to even have a "drug problem," Brentwood faced the issue squarely from the beginning. As previously mentioned, when the problem first came to light in the summer of 1968, a committee was set up that attempted to understand the phenomenon, as well as deal severely with it. Although mistakes were made and the issue of teenage drug experimentation did not go away, a tough but caring and compassionate approach to the problem evolved that has held the school in good stead over the years.

The one constant in these years of protest and change was Brentwood's commitment to excellence in the classroom. The Headmaster continued to see the "deadly average" as the enemy and he demanded the highest standards from both teacher and student. Increasingly, the personification of this academic superiority that permeated the corridors of the old classroom block was Gil Bunch. A brilliant English teacher and a flamboyant and charismatic personality, he encouraged intellectual scholarly pursuits in an otherwise "sporty" school and soon the annual, *The Brentonian*, was to have an ever-growing Literary Section, whilst his drama productions were to match in intensity, time commitment, skill and degree of success what was beginning to happen on the games field. And so was laid the foundations for what was later to become Brentwood's pioneering efforts to promote fine arts as an important and equal part of a broad-based school curriculum.

The sixties were, for all schools, a difficult and even traumatic era, but for the new Brentwood it created an ideal opportunity to take up the challenges of educating North America's now more aware and questioning generation of young people. It is not surprising, therefore, that the next decade was to witness more real and dramatic change at Brentwood than at any other time in the school's history. The students who had graduated from the original school at Brentwood Bay in June 1924 would have seen more that was similar and familiar about the Brentwood College of June 1969 than those who were to graduate a mere decade later. The rapid pace of change that resulted from the social and cultural upheavals of the years over which the Vietnam War had cast its huge, dark shadow, was now to help nourish a remarkable epoch of transformation and innovation that would culminate in the Brentwood of today. The huge contribution of both the young staff and the entire student body in this exciting process can be seen only too clearly in the pages that follow.

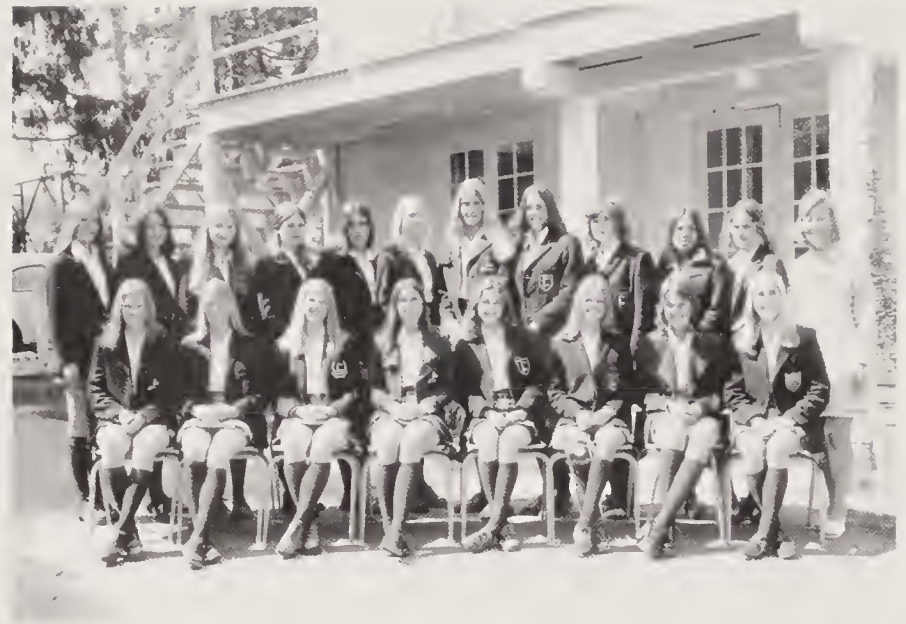
Chapter Seven: Change and Transformation, 1969–1976

“Girls have made the campus a much richer and more entertaining place.”
Ivor Ford (teacher)

Although the biggest single innovation to transform Brentwood came with the arrival of girls in 1972, change was already in the air at the school as the tumultuous decade of the sixties began to wind down. In a very real sense a metamorphosis was very tangible as the physical plant dramatically expanded, but less evident was a shift in the way Brentwood did things. The spirit of continually challenging the status quo and questioning the conventions of the past may not, unlike the new buildings that were springing up, have been immediately apparent to the boys who constantly chafed against the restrictions and demands of tradition, but it was undoubtedly present.

At the November 1968 meeting of the Board of Governors, the decision was made to pursue an aggressive program of expansion, in three stages, to over three hundred boys (by 1973). The first stage would raise the enrollment to two hundred and fifty (in reality the numbers were to stay closer to two hundred and thirty) and require the building of two new residences of the Whittall House style, plus a new dining room and an assembly hall to be completed in time for the 1969–1970 academic year. In addition, at least five new teachers would be required in order to maintain the current teacher/student ratio. To cover the cost of this program, the school (now officially renamed Brentwood College School) was granted a line of credit by the Royal Bank and a mortgage by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. At the same time, attempts were made to buy the Wilson property to the north of the existing school boundary, but ultimately, they fell through.

Even as the new building plans were going ahead, the staff were meeting to discuss Dr. Downey’s recommendation to broaden the school curriculum. With the encouragement and support of David Mackenzie, a far-reaching decision was made to change the school’s daily program quite radically. The academic day would henceforth begin at 8:15 a.m. and end at 1:10 p.m. After a late lunch (the teaching morning was broken up with a twenty-minute “cookie break” at 11:05 a.m.), three afternoons a week would be devoted to sports and three to fine arts and activities (based originally upon a French model that had come to Bill Ross’s attention). These innovations, which were to change the very nature of the school itself, were the result of a developed and stated philosophy, originating from the school’s teachers themselves, rather than an appointed administrative committee. This collegial approach to decision-making was very much in the David Mackenzie tradition, since he did not believe in creating executive positions and titles, but rather in empowering his teachers to play an active part in the administrative process of development and change. So it was through the efforts and enthusiasm of the young teachers (for instance Jim Burrows and Bill Ross completely revamped the academic timetable to fit the new three-part curriculum) that Brentwood began the process of reinventing itself. Although David Mackenzie had always encouraged his fine arts teachers like Gil



The first class of girls on Brentwood campus (1972) made it “a richer and more entertaining place.”



Mr. John Queen (1969–2001), Brentwood's longest-serving housemaster, who brought a Gilbert and Sullivan musical tradition to the school in 1969.

Bunch (drama), Jimmy Johnson (choir), Helen Smith (art), and John Boel (band) to develop strong and rewarding programs, now they were to be given equal time and status with their colleagues in the classroom and on the sports field. Rowing and sailing were also to benefit from this new arrangement. They could now offer year-round programs that did not conflict with Brentwood's traditional powerhouse sport — rugby — and which minimized the competition for a small school's available athletes. That this sweeping change in Brentwood's approach to education has expanded over the last thirty years is a huge tribute to David Mackenzie and the young teachers whose novel ideas he supported. In 1941, Alastair Gillespie had spoken of the importance to Brentwood and himself of "the singularly independent-minded men we called masters." In the new school, another generation of young teachers was maintaining the tradition and thereby ensuring that Brentwood would continue to evolve as an enlightened and forward-looking institution of learning.

In spite of the excitement that normally accompanies progress and innovation, the academic year that commenced in September 1969 did not start out well. There was an air of restlessness generated by the unusually large number of new boys (one hundred and twenty-seven), eight new faces on staff, and, above all, unfinished buildings. The malaise, which manifested itself in an increased number of runaways and withdrawals because of homesickness, lasted until the building program was completed just before Christmas. The students most affected were the boys in the two new residences. In Privett House, a new assistant (John Queen) had to run the house with only intermittent help from the housemaster (Victor Lironi, also new) because the unfinished housemaster's apartment obliged Victor and his family to live ten miles away at the Cowichan Bay Inn. Although this unfortunate situation was resolved by mid-term, the current housemaster of Ellis House (Nick Prowse, since 1966) did not have a new house to move into until the beginning of December. Therefore, for the whole of the first term, his charges were scattered around campus (the old Ellis House, Whittall House and the small residence just outside the entrance to the school), making it extremely difficult to generate any "house spirit," a vital ingredient for a happy school. David Mackenzie's policy of hiring "personalities" (strong, enthusiastic all-rounders) rather than specific "experts" (tied to a particular area of teaching), which had worked so well in a small, young school, was now producing in a larger, more complex school some conspicuous weaknesses in the academic program that needed to be addressed. On the plus side, a new, completed and much larger dining room beyond the gym, where the old boiler house once stood, enabled cafeteria-style meals to replace the formal meals of the old dining room (much to the relief of the students, but not necessarily the staff and parents who witnessed a corresponding deterioration in table manners). This new facility also allowed the old dining room to be turned into a much more spacious and secluded library under the direction of a newly qualified librarian, Frank Martin — a pioneer Brentwood teacher (recently returned from a professional course at UBC).

Amidst the inevitable confusion and disruption that resulted from a school that was experiencing some genuine growing pains, the young staff worked tirelessly to make the campus environment more agreeable for the boys. The new plant, particularly the residences, now supplied amenities that had been unheard of when the school opened in 1961. These houses provided rooms for two to three students with space available to create a genuine "home away from home atmosphere" whilst the common rooms had kitchen facilities as well as space for a pool table and a lounge area for relaxed TV watching. Even so, the trend outside Brentwood, particularly in Eastern Canada and the United States, was moving away from traditional boarding schools. The biggest factor was that more and more parents were letting their children choose their own schools and it was

becoming increasingly apparent, according to an American headmaster, “that the rural, rustic life (was) not attractive to young people” and that, “today’s youth is no longer accepting of the kind of authority many traditional schools represent.”

Although in due course the problems connected with the so-called “boarding school blues” were to facilitate the introduction of co-education at Brentwood, the Board of Governors and the Headmaster and his staff were aware that the time had come to broaden curricula and remove many anachronistic customs. A start had been made with a greatly expanded fine arts program and better living conditions for the students, but further steps now needed to be taken.

In the fall of 1969, David Mackenzie asked Bill Ross and Nick Prowse to establish a committee to investigate the need for an increased role for the students in the administration of the school. The result was the setting up of a Student Advisory Council under the sponsorship of Bill Ross and the chairmanship of grade eleven student, Tim Collinge, to advise the Headmaster on student affairs. Council members were elected by each grade in each residence and, in a productive trial year, student input was encouraged and listened to, resulting in changes to the allotment of weekend leaves and Sunday dress regulations.

The social side of residential life was further enhanced when, with the enthusiastic support of drama guru Gil Bunch, his discipline was combined with the band and choir (as well as young ladies from Queen Margaret’s School) in a production of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Pirates of Penzance*. In this first of many Brentwood musicals, the idea was to involve as many students as possible. Director John Queen, newly arrived from England, where he had considerable past experience in this genre, made it clear from the beginning that, in addition to the principals, he wanted large male and female choruses, and extensive staff-student participation behind the scenes, thereby making it a truly Brentwood effort. Although Gil Bunch, unlike the Headmaster, was no admirer of Gilbert and Sullivan, his and David Mackenzie’s stamp of approval made this first experiment in large-scale musical theatre a highly successful one, with Hilary Groos (on loan from Q.M.S. and much later herself a Brentwood parent) as Mabel, and Maurice Stanley and Mike Hicks (as the Major-General and Police Sergeant, respectively) putting on particularly fine performances in what was described as “a delightful evening.” Although the three-day run did not take place until the first week of the summer term, the production played a major role in bringing together the student body after a difficult beginning to the year and it was a thoroughly worthy “opener” for the new auditorium.

On the academic side, efforts were also being made to provide more personal guidance and direction. Each boy was assigned an advisor from the teaching staff who kept an eye on his academic progress and to whom he could go if he was facing any difficulty in the classroom. In addition, at the senior level, a new director of studies was appointed (Bill Ross) to facilitate student entry into university through advice on post-secondary requirements and visits to and by post-secondary institutions.

Changes were also taking place in the sports program. Rugby remained the major sport for two terms — the 1st XV, once again, were B.C. High School Champions (1969) and, together with the Colts, enjoyed a successful tour to the U.K. in



Pirates of Penzance, 1970 —
Brentwood’s first musical
production.



Brentwood's first Student Advisory Council, 1970.

December. Nevertheless, the compulsory nature of the sport was starting to be relaxed for those whom the coaches deemed surplus to Brentwood's rugby requirements!

Thus badminton, originally started by Bob Orr (Head of Languages) in 1967, enjoyed its most successful year, winning the Independent Schools' title convincingly and reaching the final of the Vancouver Island High Schools' Championships. The Headmaster, rugby enthusiast though he was, even agreed to have new lights and a better colour scheme put in the gym in time for next year's season.

It would be wrong, however, to imply that rugby's dominance of the Brentwood sports scene was coming to an end — far from it, in fact. However, for the first time, an alternative had now been introduced for those few students who could obtain permission to be excused from playing the school's number-one game. Similarly, in the third term of 1969, track and field was reduced to one compulsory hour a week (on Thursdays) for those called upon by the coach to participate. The new emphasis was on relaxation and freedom of choice (after the rigours of the rugby season) and a number of new sports, such as swimming, cross-country running, soccer and field hockey joined

tennis as popular alternatives in the second and third terms. This fracturing of the school's sports program did not immediately reduce competition for the best athletes; Brentwood's premier performers like Ro Hindson, Mike Hicks, Brian Hawksworth, Phil Ross and Danny Powell continued to excel at a provincial level and results in rugby and track and field competitions continued to be excellent. Unfortunately though, the lack of a head of games (nobody had been appointed since Alan Rees resigned in 1965) also resulted in the absence of an overall plan for the games program at the exact moment when a proliferation of freer choices began to emerge. Ultimately, this complex issue would have to be addressed, but in the meantime the easy working relationship between the 1st XV rugby coaches (Ivor Ford and Nick Prowse, both academic teachers, who had been appointed as temporary replacements for Alan Rees, but ended up successfully working in tandem for the next fourteen years) and the 1st VIII rowing coach (another academic teacher, Tony Carr) kept tensions to a minimum even as they each pushed hard for their own sport, as athletic options increased.

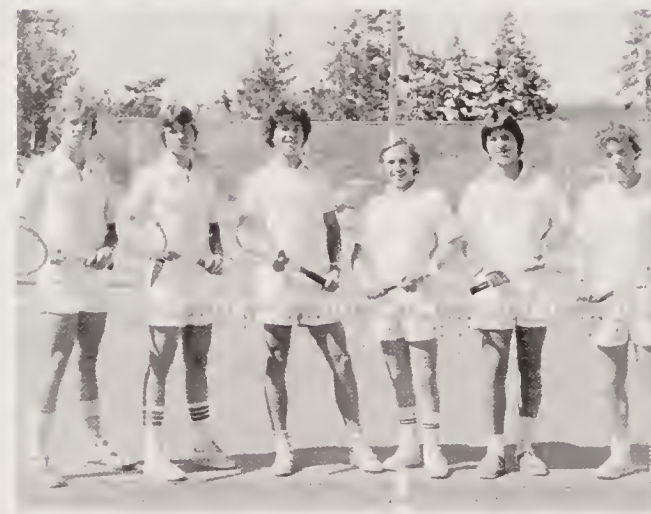
Though the purists would argue that Brentwood's domination of the high school sports scene in rugby and track and field came to an end when the school's sports program became more flexible in terms of choice, it was only in track and field that the numbers and therefore overall performance gradually began to drop. The school was to continue to enjoy its share of success in rugby, even as rowing emerged from the shadows, and many of the average student athletes became more positive and enthusiastic in their approach to a sports program that now gave them some element of choice.

This trend towards a more varied and less autocratic program at Brentwood, based on some freedom of choice, had become a reality by the time the school celebrated its tenth anniversary, but the argument about its value would continue. The issue of whether the school was sacrificing a commitment to excellence in a few selected areas of endeavour for the sake of recreational enjoyment in many different activities raged on through the early seventies. The evidence, however, was inconclusive.

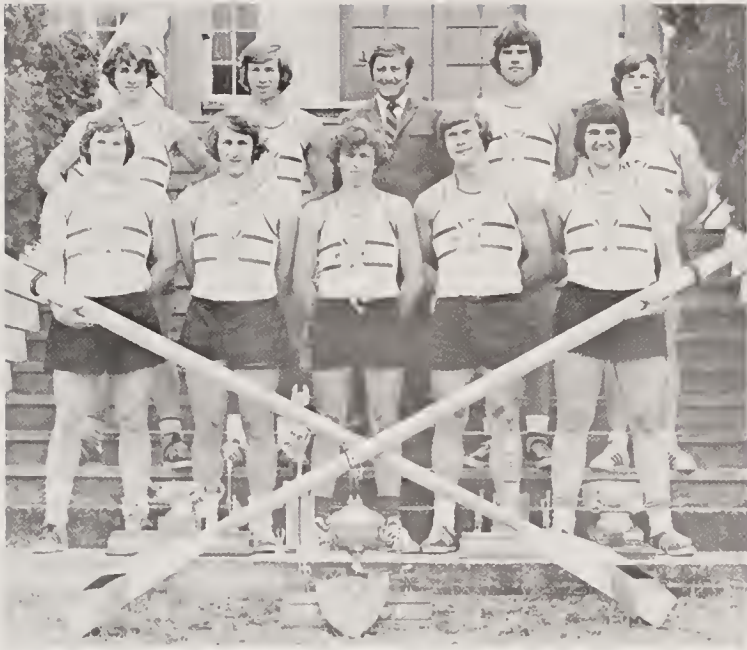
On the one hand the 1st XV did enter a brief period of decline and one coach (Ivor Ford) bemoaned in the 1971 Brentwood school annual that “playing for fun was too often synonymous with a casual approach, and a slack attitude to training” and that it was easy to forget that “those years at the top were a result of extreme dedication, hard training, attention to detail and the ability to play on *guts* when it really counted.” On the other hand, many new and emerging Brentwood sports started to enjoy a high level of success for the first time. Swimming, cross-country running, sailing and tennis now joined badminton as winners of B.C. Independent Schools’ Championships. In particular, mention should be made of Jeff McBride, who won the British Columbia Junior Olympic sailing title for single-handed sailing in Lasers in the fall of 1975, thus bringing recognition to the Brentwood sailing program for the first time. Meanwhile, a small group of Brentwood Ramblers went to Breckenridge, Colorado to complete the challenging ski-mountaineering course. In a ten-day instruction period that included a one-day “immersion” expedition involving skills in packing, compass and map reading, snow bivouacking and trail cooking, they proved how successful the school’s outdoor recreation program had become.

Above all, of course, the rowing club, which was resisting the new trend (since it was now a year-round sport involving a major commitment), was beginning to make a name for itself. In the spring of 1971, Brentwood decided to host a rowing meet with Lakeside from Seattle and Sentinel High School from West Vancouver on a Sunday afternoon. The Americans eventually arrived just before lunch and Tony Carr sat down with the opposing coaches and a schedule was quickly scribbled on a scrap of paper. This document still exists and is kept in the archives as a permanent record of Brentwood’s first regatta. There were about six races spread comfortably through the afternoon with a break for a late meal. Everyone had a jolly time and the visitors left in time for their respective evening ferries. Brentwood was a particularly generous host and failed to win a single event (these were still the days of inadequate equipment according to Tony Carr). Later in the season, however, Brentwood, for the first time, defeated both Shawnigan and Lakeside. Thus 1971 was a banner year in rowing, for this season was the precursor of what was to come, in terms of both Brentwood crews and the Brentwood International Regatta. Over the next decade the Brentwood Rowing Club grew significantly and the regatta grew with it. Although these historic and exciting firsts for Brentwood rowers undoubtedly raised the profile of the sport on campus, they in no way prepared the school for the sudden and stunning achievement of the 1972 1st VIII, when they unexpectedly won the Canadian High School Championships at St. Catharine’s, Ontario. Not only was this particular success to be repeated many times over the next thirty years, but two of this crew (Jim Henniger and Mike Moran), together with Greg Hood from the previous year’s crew, would become the first of many Brentonians to represent Canada at this sport in the years that followed.

The thrill of that first victory at the national level has not diminished over the years. The “Crew of ’72” will always hold a unique place in any history of Brentwood because they gave the school its first taste of national recognition. They were the first schoolboy crew from the west coast of Canada to break the eastern monopoly at the “nationals,” and the account of that famous race in the *St. Catharine’s Standard*, still evokes a special sense of pride in all Brentonians:



Girls and boys tennis teams, 1975 — there was no co-ed tennis team in this era.



1st VIII, Canadian High School Champions, 1972. The beginning of Brentwood's long history of success at the national level.

The big eight, which climaxed an exciting afternoon of real battles, was a fight from start to finish. All six starters rowed stroke for stroke through the first 300 metres until Holy Spirit and J.E.B. Stuart High School of Fairfax County, Virginia forged into a slight lead. Then Brentwood and Ridley moved, only to be immediately challenged by West Park and Liverpool (N.Y.) High School.

It was this way, with first one and then another of the crews grabbing the lead, through the first 800 metres. Then the west coast boat moved.

Stroke Jeff Allester, who had hardly dropped below 38 from the start, climbed to 40 passing Henley Island and Brentwood had the lead.

Holy Spirit came with the British Columbia crew, only to give way to West Park as Ridley appeared to be labouring. But there was little to choose between any of the six crews.

With about 200 metres to go as the packed stands and crowded banks went wild, Brentwood was definitely in command.

Holy Spirit was pressing half a length off the pace with Stuart coming and Ridley, suddenly finding itself, showing signs as stroke Fraser MacKay went to 38 and closed water on the leaders.

But it was too late for the orange and black. Brentwood hung on grimly, refusing to break, and Ridley forged past Stuart and Holy Spirit to wind up a deck off the winners as Stuart held third and Holy Spirit faded to fourth, another half length back. Liverpool wound up fifth with West Park, having blown everything in its late challenge, trailing the field.

Brentwood clocked a sizzling 4:25.6 for the 1500 metre distance, the fastest time of the day which saw only a whisper of a breeze over most of the Henley Course.

In praising this exceptional crew, Coach Carr said, "They gave more of themselves to this school than any other group of students before them and they proved that hard work and determination can overcome all barriers and can succeed over superior experience and skill."

They had triumphed over the best high school crews in North America and in the process set the standard for years to come. This was the beginning of a Brentwood dynasty in rowing at the provincial and national level, and the late-night, spontaneous and enthusiastic welcome the crew received from their fellow students upon their return to Brentwood was both richly deserved and truly genuine. Nobody who was there that evening will ever forget the endless cheers that resounded around the campus. This élite group of young men had shown what a small school from Canada's west coast could achieve given the right ingredients, and it was to inspire Brentonians for years to come. Indeed, just a year later Brentwood won the Heavy Eight at the Canadian Schoolboy Championships again and this was followed in 1975 by eight Brentwood rowers being selected to

represent British Columbia in the Western Canada Summer Games and winning gold in the pair, the coxed pair and the eight (with two UBC oarsmen).

Even as the sports program became more diversified, without apparently sacrificing excellence (as the St. Catharine's accomplishments vividly showed), the other two parts of the newly developed tripartite program were also expanding their offerings with great success. The year 1971–1972 saw many exciting firsts, including an Independent Schools Music Festival hosted by Brentwood, a band and choir concert (that would eventually grow into Brentwood's acclaimed Evening of Music), and three major drama productions — another staff review written and produced by Ivor Ford, two more musicals directed by John Queen (Gilbert and Sullivan's *HMS Pinafore* and *Trial by Jury*) and two serious plays (Eugene O'Neill's *In the Zone* and A. A. Milne's *The Man in the Bowler Hat*) presented by Brentwood's Drama Club and directed by Gil Bunch. Here was solid proof that when the Assistant Headmaster Gil Bunch claimed on graduation day in 1971 that “we at Brentwood do very sincerely believe that fine arts are, first and foremost, a very vital part of any young person's development,” the school was taking this conviction seriously. Henceforth, under Gil's leadership, the school would pride itself in presenting “good plays of all ages, ones rich in ideas, language and characterization, pieces which will entertain and stimulate our audiences whilst providing a challenge for the developing skills of our young actors.” Here was a commitment to excellence that matched the demands made in rugby and rowing.

Several other new activities also blossomed in the early seventies. The arrival of two energetic retirees, Reg and Dot Pitt (Reg had, until recently, been the senior physical education instructor at R.M.C. Kingston), heralded a considerable expansion in the use of the gym and the pool. P.E. with Reg was now added to the morning timetable for the juniors (deck hockey, once introduced, soon became a passion for them) and, on the three activities afternoons, the pool became a hive of aquatic activity as a large group of boys across all grades participated in competitive swimming for the first time (the school won its first Independent Schools Championships in 1971). In addition, by the end of the second year of operation, the Pitts were graduating over fifty boys with Red Cross Water Safety Society Awards — the only school in Canada to be involved in such a large-scale, life-saving program.

Meanwhile, debating, though it remained an extracurricular activity with no formal time slot at its disposal, and relying on students who participated purely for fun, also made a sudden and dramatic impact at this time. Originally started by grade ten English teacher, Nick Prowse, as part of his morning academic classes, this voluntary activity grew rapidly in stature when his 1968–1969 class moved onto the senior grades and a group of them persuaded Mr. Bunch to take them under his wing. In its second year of operation (1970–1971), the debating team (junior and senior) won both the Newman Cup (B.C. Independent Schools) and the Hammarskjöld Cup (B.C. High Schools), a truly remarkable achievement. Two seniors, Wade Davis and Graham Vink (who won the best individual debater awarded at the B.C.'s), went on to the Canadian Nationals held at Port Hope in Ontario, where Graham, in partnership with a young woman from Manitoba, won the award for the best opposition team and best overall team at the tournament. So outstanding was the Brentwood senior team that they were invited to



Mr. T. Gil Bunch's debating team, 1970–1971, provincial champions.



Wade Davis, Head Prefect, 1970–1971 and the present school's best-known graduate.

demonstrate parliamentary-style debate to schools from around B.C. Not surprisingly, the school's top debaters, Wade Davis and Graham Vink, later each became the first Brentonians to win scholarships to Harvard University and Stanford University, respectively. Wade (1st XV and drama) and Graham (badminton team and choir) were also fine all-rounders as well as school prefects, and there is no doubt that their high-profile image around the school did an enormous amount at this time to promote intellectual pursuits.

Wade Davis's greatest contribution to Brentwood, however, was in his role as head prefect. Bright, articulate and intense, he had a considerable effect on the way the school operated through his reforming zeal, which challenged the traditional role of the prefect on campus. His new ideas (he began the year with a talk to the whole school without the staff present) were not always successful, and the forces of conservatism did briefly rebound after he graduated, but there is no doubt that his concept of prefects as mentors rather than enforcers (or lords of discipline) was to have a lasting and very positive impact on his school. Those of us who knew him well were not in the least bit surprised when later he became a world-renowned ethnobotanist, best-selling author and powerful advocate for the world's indigenous peoples.

Speech Day 1971 was a very special occasion — the school celebrated its tenth anniversary on the Mill Bay site. In the circumstances, it was deemed appropriate to keep the occasion purely domestic and, instead of a guest speaker, the Headmaster himself spoke to the whole school, including the graduating class. The core of his final message to the boys was that, in a remarkably short space of time, the school had achieved a most enviable reputation which must be guarded closely and nurtured carefully by them and future generations of Brentonians. David Mackenzie reminded them all that the Brentwood College way was by no means the most comfortable but, if results were to be the criteria, then surely it was a highly effective one.

This graduating class of 1971 was not only the new school's tenth, it was also the first to contain offshore students of a different nationality. Like the original Brentwood, today's school had always contained Americans and Canadians living overseas because their parents worked abroad, but this was the first time that overseas nationals had graduated from Brentwood. In 1968, the Board of Governors had supported the Headmaster in his decision to bring in a student from Hong Kong. When Benny Sung entered the school in grade ten (1968), he became the first student of a different cultural and ethnic background to come to Brentwood. His graduation in 1971 (with Benjamin Koo, who had come a year later in 1969) was the culmination of an outstanding Brentwood career in which he had been a superior student in the visual and performing arts (he went on to a distinguished career as an international jewellery designer), as well as a fine school prefect and assistant head of Whittall House, for which he was awarded the Powell Cup for Citizenship. Benny's remarkable ability to accept fully what Brentwood had to offer, whilst preserving his individual identity, played a large part in ensuring the success of this venture, which continues today and now brings in many exceptional students from the Pacific Rim, including Japan and Korea as well as Mexico, Central America and Europe.

At the end of this momentous first decade of the new Brentwood, two further changes happened that, although no one realized it at the time, were also to bring change to the school in the future. The first involved the physical plant, the second the

makeup of the student body. In 1971, the old motel units that constituted Senior House were pulled down and a new residence called Rogers House (after Old Brentonian, school benefactor and founding governor Forrest Rogers) was built to replace them. This new house, though initially for seniors only, was soon to become cross-grade, thus moving Brentwood still further away from David Mackenzie's Merchiston model and the concept of residences based on grade and age (Rogers and Hope were the last to switch). Also, because Rogers was designed to house adult instructors during the school's summer status as a recreational camp (either tennis or ice hockey — both short-lived), the standard of luxury in the building was much higher than in the other residences that had been built during an earlier period of austerity. Eventually, the other residences would be upgraded with expanded common room facilities and two to a room as the norm (though the idea of each room having its own shower and toilet facilities was rejected, even in Rogers, because it adversely affected the sense of sharing that helped to produce community spirit). The building of Rogers House was originally part of a larger expansion program that included a social centre for senior students. Escalating costs, however, made this impossible, so a small section of the old Senior House East, which had originally been earmarked for demolition was saved and then converted in order to provide an area in which senior students could mingle socially.

The other innovation was much less immediately apparent, but nonetheless it ultimately altered the school considerably in the years to come. At a governors' meeting held in June 1970, the business of scholarships and bursaries was discussed as it was deemed vital to attract top-class students to the school, regardless of financial circumstances. After considerable discussion, the consensus was that all such monies should go to qualified students who were needy, rather than to those who qualified only through academic ability. New Board member Sir Michael Butler agreed to take on the task of raising money for these bursaries (though at the time, many Board members felt it was more important to use all monies raised to reduce the bank loan). From this moment on, thanks to the continuing work of Sir Michael Butler, particularly after he became Chairman of the Board, as well as the efforts of Bill Ross after he was appointed Headmaster in 1976, Brentwood was able to minimize the adverse effects of ever-increasing fees reducing the student pool to a smaller and smaller socio-economic group. The school's egalitarian nature and its rejection of the philosophy of élitism helped to make a broadly based and dynamic institution of which all could be proud. The tolerant, liberal-minded Brentwood of today owes a considerable debt to these two farsighted gentlemen.

At that same important governors' meeting held in the summer of 1970, at which the issue of bursaries had been raised, the topic of co-education was also put forward. In a discussion on the "boarding school blues" previously mentioned and increasing enrollment to three hundred in order to get more revenue, the issue was raised about the possibility of bringing in girls and housing them on the Wilson property. The Headmaster, in a previous report to Forrest Rogers (now Chairman of the Board of Governors), had talked about bringing in girls to the senior school, not only to make Brentwood more attractive to parents and youngsters, but also to make available a new market to ease the recruiting difficulties caused by the recent changes in educational climate (even though the school itself continued to do well). At the meeting, David

STUDENT HOME READY

MILL BAY — The first building in Brentwood College's expansion program is expected to be completed in mid-August.

The new two-storey \$250,000 senior student residence is being built at the south end of the school campus overlooking Mill Bay. It will accommodate 60 students.

Newspaper clipping from the *Vancouver Sun*, July 16th, 1974. Rogers House established a new standard of luxury for Brentwood students.



Miss Ann Holden, 1972–1981, played a key role in ensuring the success of co-education at Brentwood.

Mackenzie reinforced his argument in favour of bringing in girls by quoting from an article in *Time* magazine which talked about the growing interest in the United States in co-education and how a number of famous English public schools, including Marlborough College, had successfully brought girls into their senior grades. He then suggested that the school should approach Queen Margaret's in Duncan in regard to a co-ordinated organization for senior students.

In the end, because Queen Margaret's was not interested and the purchasing of the next-door Wilson property was not yet possible, a co-ordinated organization was rejected. The issue of Brentwood going co-ed came down to whether the current Board of Governors would or would not endorse this new direction for the school. After the resignation of three Board members and the judicious creation of a largely new keen co-education Board (with Mr. Hugh Stephens playing a strong supportive role), coupled with the persuasive enthusiasm of the Headmaster, the momentous decision was made to bring girls into grades eleven and twelve. They were to be housed in Hope House (to be renamed Alexandra after the Queen Alexandra Solarium), commencing in September 1972. Many years later David Mackenzie declared that bringing girls into Brentwood was the highlight of his career, and even the governors who had resigned over the issue later told him that his pursuit of co-education for Brentwood had been, in hindsight, the right move at the right time. Much of the credit, of course, must go to the nineteen young women and their housemistress, Ann Holden, fresh from Crofton House, a well-known, independent school for girls in Vancouver, who successfully "infiltrated what (was) supposedly one of the last male bastions, the boys' private school," even though initially in very limited numbers. Perhaps the most immediate and tangible result of their arrival was the "countless photographers and copy writers" who appeared at the school in their wake. The school had never had so much free publicity, which was not surprising, since this Brentwood experiment in co-educational boarding education was a Canadian first.

The excitement surrounding the arrival of the girls on campus did not necessarily mean that Brentwood was really prepared for them. David Mackenzie, the eternal optimist, had somewhat naïvely believed that "things would just work out." In fact, "everyone learned as they went along." With no precedent anywhere in Canada, this was perhaps not surprising. Girl-boy issues (everything from relationships to punishments) in a residential situation were not addressed beforehand, but rather worked out after the fact! In these circumstances, strong leadership was required, and in this regard the school was lucky to have it. A huge vote of thanks must go to Joyce Mackenzie, the Headmaster's wife, who from the beginning was determined that this experiment would work and spent a large amount of her time (together with Yvonne Carr) providing tremendous support for Ann Holden as her assistant, guide and mentor. Ann was definitely the right person for the job. She was a talented biology teacher with considerable experience in both Scotland and Jamaica prior to coming to Canada, as well as a thoughtful and compassionate housemistress who worked long hours to ensure that she ran a much needed "tight ship" that also managed to be "relaxed and comfortable." The fact that she remained close to many of these original girls until her sad and untimely death in February 2002 is a solid testament to what she achieved. The girls also must be saluted for all they did to ensure their successful integration into a male-dominated campus. Fortunately, a number of them had private and/or boarding experience, having come from Crofton House and Queen Margaret's. One of them later commented, "(we) were raised in strict accordance with the rules of 'ladyship' — what a relief to go to Brentwood!" The two chosen by the girls as prefects, Laurie Rutherford and Shannon MacEwing, turned out to be exceptional leaders. Laurie had in fact already graduated from

Oak Bay High School (where she was President of the Student Council) and therefore brought some much-needed maturity to the position, whilst Shannon was already well acquainted with Brentwood through her previous drama experience at the school whilst in grade eleven at Q.M.S. Fortunately, in their dealings with the boys around the campus in their role as school prefects, Laurie and Shannon had the strong support of an outstanding head prefect, Graham Young (son of Maurice Young), who gave his unstinting support to the process. Many years later Laurie recalled that “the grommets” (junior boys) were “cute,” and the senior boys “fun and charming.” She still feels strongly that all the boys “worked hard to make the experiment work,” and that they always “made the girls feel welcome.”

Perhaps most importantly, after the novelty wore off and the furore died down, the girls’ successful assimilation into the Brentwood program was based very much on the willingness of each one of these female pioneers to participate fully in campus life. In this way they soon won over the sceptics amongst the boys and their overwhelmingly male teachers. Complaining about girls weakening the school programs or adversely affecting traditional school discipline gradually disappeared in the face of the girls’ commitment to Brentwood’s ideals, whilst Ann Holden quickly won over the male teachers with her wonderful cooking and generous hospitality!

With so few girls, they were expected to be “all things to all people” and, for the most part, they were. Once the novelty of their presence had worn off, it would have been easy for the boys to revert back to the old ways, but this was not allowed to happen. Not all the girls were scholars or athletes or singers or actresses, but they were all willing to be involved and so the impact of their presence was felt in all areas of school endeavour and, in this way, they helped to dramatically reshape the school. Certainly there were difficulties, perhaps most obviously in adjusting the rules to fit a co-ed population, and initially some of the boys felt discriminated against, but ultimately everyone adapted and the experiment was labelled a success.

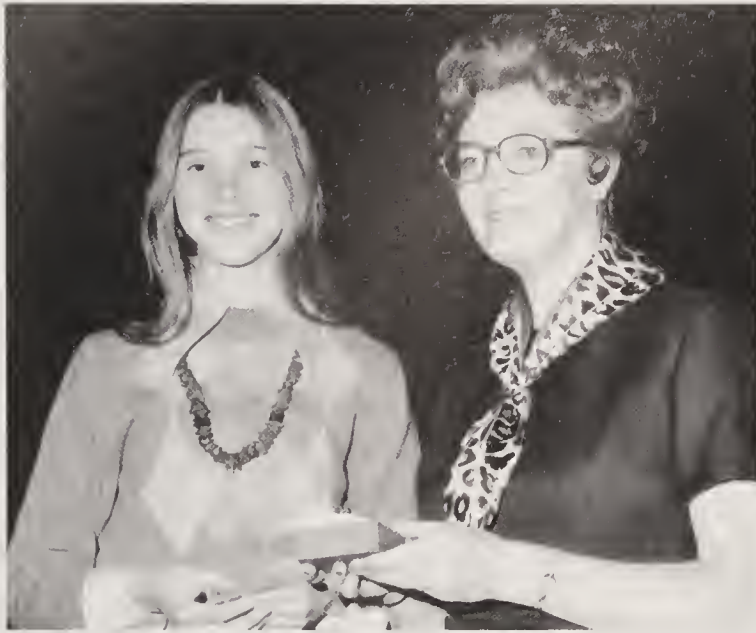
By the second year, not only was Alex House full, but an overflow house had been created on the top floor of Ivor Ford’s residence, thereby more than doubling the female student population. As their numbers grew, so did the girls’ positive effect on Brentwood increase. By the end of 1974 they had won two of the school’s major awards — the Butchart Trophy for the Dux of the School to Nola Gregson in 1973, and the Yarrow Shield for outstanding academic and athletic achievement and superior leadership to Sarah Scott in 1974.

The girls’ arrival at Brentwood may have been more for practical reasons than philosophical ones, but, now that they were well established, few would deny that it had started an important and successful trend in Canadian education.

This was also the year that the graduating class took on more responsibilities in the school. With much of the drive being provided by the girls, the senior class organized new school activities like the Santa Claus breakfast and Slave Days, and formed their own graduation committee to raise money for and plan the senior class dance. This positive school leadership was undoubtedly good for morale and school spirit generally but, in the end, perhaps too much time was spent on social activities (in addition to all the usual heavy responsibilities of the senior class). Certainly the very moderate provincial examination results in 1973 (which were to be the last external examinations for the decade) showed that a student in grade twelve had to



Sarah Scott, the school’s first female winner of the Yarrow Shield, 1974.



Top high school student in B.C., Nona-Lynne Avren is presented with the Governor-General's Silver Medal by Education Minister Eileen Dailly at Brentwood, 1975.

be extremely well organized and have good time-management skills in order to be successful academically on top of all the other demands that competed for his or her time. As the school became a more demanding and complex place, this lesson had to be learned, and learned quickly. This having been said, it should be noted that the fine arts had never been stronger and sports continued to be of a very high calibre with, in both cases, total participation and the pursuit of excellence providing the underpinning for each program.

Suddenly, in the midst of this era of unprecedented growth, the school was forced to face its biggest and most unexpected challenge — to find a successor for founding Headmaster David Mackenzie when ill health forced him to retire. The huge impact of this unexpected turn of events was dramatically brought into focus by Ivor Ford who, in his words of praise, wrote of David “only a man with David’s sort of enthusiasm could have had the audacity to start a school, and then to build it to its present stage of development where it is amongst the best schools in Canada.” The last three years of the Mackenzie Era were living proof of this. The Brentwood College School of 1973 to 1976 was largely the creation of this one man. This school was very much a reflection of his energy, his optimism, his zeal and his enormously wide range of interests. Every aspect of campus life was affected

by his extravagant, sometimes excessive “boyish spirit.” The School Band was as much his passion as the 1st XV. In this atmosphere it was not surprising that there was, by the end of David’s fifteen-year tenure, a real flowering of all that was best about Brentwood and its approach to education.

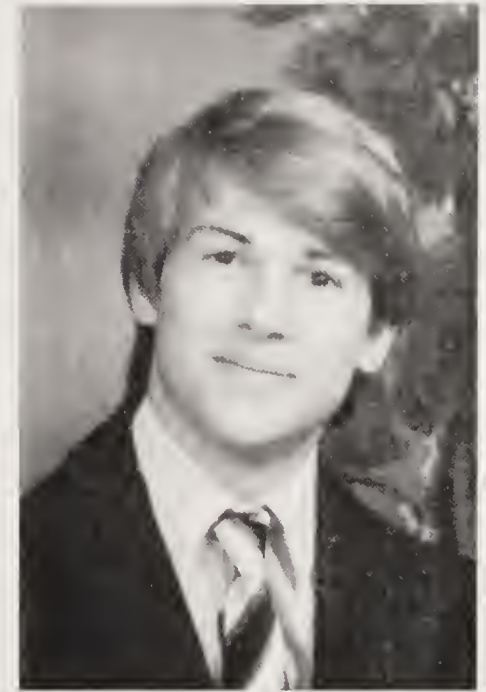
Standards may have been disappearing elsewhere in education in British Columbia but not at Brentwood. Each department in the Headmaster’s beloved tripartite program proved in these three years what can be achieved with the right ingredients — strong leadership, good young teachers and talented students. In academics, Jerry Klima (in 1974) won the B.C. High School Science Fair and finished second in the National Competition and Nona Avren (in 1975) became the second Brentwood student in six years to be awarded the Governor-General’s Silver Medal for finishing top in the provincial scholarship exams. By 1976, over twenty-five percent of the graduating class were winning provincial scholarships and one hundred and twenty-three had been so honoured since the school opened in 1961. This record was as good as any school in the province, public or private. The achievements in sports and fine arts also revealed that the high levels of success were not confined to academics alone. Under newly appointed music director Robert Cooper (in 1973), the band and choir (Jimmy Johnson was still director) reached new heights, winning the top awards at the Cowichan Music Festival in three successive years, including best brass player twice (Bridget Troussel in 1974 and Cameron Scott in 1976), whilst the choir was also invited to sing with the B.C. Youth Choir in 1976. Not surprisingly in two of these years the school presented two major musicals — *Damn Yankees* (1974) and *The Mikado* (1975). In the former, Gil Bunch ventured into the musical genre himself for the first time with great success and the production included Shannon MacEwing in the female lead (whilst a freshman at the University of Victoria), following her two previous lead performances in *HMS Pinafore* (1972, whilst still a student at Q.M.S.) and in *The Gondoliers* (1973, the first year of girls at Brentwood). This remarkable feat by a Brentwood girl was not surpassed until Kharytia Bilash, a 2000 graduate, performed a leading role in three musicals consecutively beginning in her grade ten year at the school. As

Shannon was carving a name for herself in Brentwood musical history, so were the Butterfield brothers. Both Philip (who today is president of Rompus Interactive Multimedia) and Peter (who is currently director of Vancouver's Cantata Singers) played lead roles in *The Mikado* and, later, younger brother Benjamin, who was to go on to a career as an internationally acclaimed tenor, played the male lead in the 1982 production of *The Gondoliers*. The eldest Butterfield, Chris (now a professor of music at the University of Victoria and recently the composer in residence with the Victoria Symphony Orchestra), sadly attended Brentwood prior to the school's introduction of musical theatre into the program, though he did "star" in some of Ivor Ford's early reviews.

Another accomplishment connected with *Damn Yankees* was also to enter Brentwood folklore. The male lead was played by Keith Hutton, whose two great passions at Brentwood were acting and rugby. As vice-captain of the 1st XV, he had a major commitment to his two coaches (Ivor Ford and Nick Prowse) as well as to his director, Gil Bunch. Thus Keith was determined to play a late afternoon rugby match at the University of Victoria just prior to the opening night of *Damn Yankees*. As luck would have it he sustained a major injury (requiring twenty stitches in his mouth) just before the end of the game. The intern at the Jubilee Hospital in Victoria who sewed him up told Keith there was no chance he could perform (including singing!) that evening. But perform he did, and brilliantly. This incident was an important test for the Brentwood philosophy of encouraging all-round participation (in a variety of school activities) without compromising the pursuit of excellence (in a particular one). A few nay-sayers amongst Brentwood's teachers claimed that, though this concept provided good publicity for the Headmaster, the two beliefs were in fact mutually exclusive. Keith, through his courage and commitment, proved otherwise. His achievement was to provide the inspiration for future generations of Brentonians who wished to fulfill their potential in the complete tripartite program, rather than to just one part of it.

Then, in the spring of 1976, in a sudden change of pace, Gil Bunch faced his most daring challenge, directing high school students in Friedrich Durrenmatt's bizarre and forbidding play *The Physicists*, which played in due course to most appreciative houses. A strong cast and a shining performance by Patrick Hogan (who had appeared in every one of Gil Bunch's productions since he entered the school in grade eight) gave Gil his "most demanding and most rewarding directorial role." In this play, even Gil reached new heights and a critic's description of this production as a "truly electrifying piece of drama" re-enforced what everyone had long believed; namely, that under Gil Bunch's brilliant direction, the Brentwood Drama Club was capable of truly professional performances and that their versatility was extraordinary.

These achievements in the fine arts were, meanwhile, more than matched by similarly outstanding performances in sports. The 1st XV won the B.C. Independent Schools' Championship in 1974, beating the B.C. High Schools' champions twice in the process, and no less than four members of this team (Brodie Cupples, captain, Graham Foreman, Mike Wiggins and Darryl Thierman) went on to form the core of the 1st VIII that won the Canadian High School Rowing Championship in the same year. Then, in 1975, a presumably much weaker 1st XV surprised everyone by reaching the final of the B.C. High School Tournament before losing honourably to a very powerful Magee Secondary XV. The school teams in tennis, sailing, skiing (slalom) and swimming also won B.C. Independent Schools' Championships in this period. Meanwhile, the program was broadening still further with the introduction of a Wilderness Survival Program (popularly known as Rambling) by



Benjamin Butterfield, 1982 —
from Brentwood's Gilbert and
Sullivan operettas to a career as an
internationally acclaimed tenor.

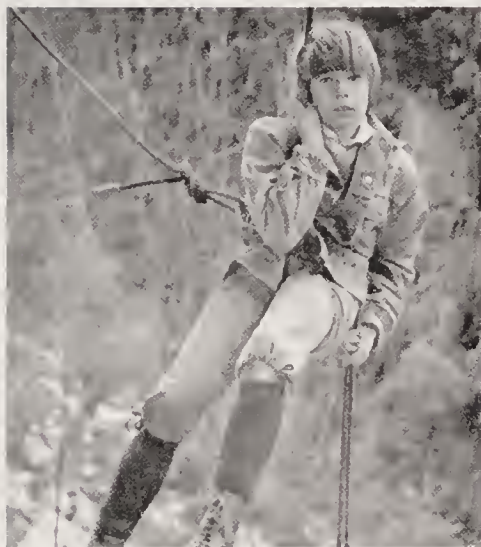


outdoorsman and English teacher Robert Common, water polo, thanks to the ever-energetic Reg Pitt, basketball, reintroduced again after a five-year hiatus, and curling, as a term two recreational option under the sponsorship of Nick Prowse and made possible by a new arena in Mill Bay. This wonderful facility also enabled Brentwood to add ice hockey as a competitive sport in the second term, much to the delight of the growing number of students from Alberta. Together with soccer, ice hockey was really to benefit from rugby, becoming, for the first time, a one-term sport. (Oh, how the purists bemoaned this decision, but it was a true sign of the times as Brentwood continued to thrive on a more diversified, multi-choice, sports program).

In the meantime, the school itself continued to grow and a second girls' house (The Hilton) was added in 1974 with the conversion of the top two floors of the main block to girls' dormitories. It had originally been Ellis House until the boys moved into new quarters in 1969 and, in 1971, had become an overflow annex for Senior House. In just three years the female population had risen to sixty-three and the overall student numbers to over three hundred for the first time. Inevitably, this expansion led to a

student body that was over half new students, which resulted in some unhappiness and uncertainty. Wishing to avoid the ongoing, unacceptably high attrition rate, particularly that connected with the morale problems and their consequences encountered in 1969, the staff, led by Gil Bunch and Bill Ross, decided, for the first time, to ease the transition into residential life at Brentwood. All the new students arrived two days early and, with the help of a number of "old hands," the teachers introduced the new arrivals to the complexities of the Brentwood program and philosophy, hoping in the process to overcome the confusing and often traumatic experiences associated with a new and unfamiliar educational approach. It was generally agreed that this new orientation program was the major contributing factor to one of the best first terms ever. However, though its success was immediate, ultimately, more care would be needed in order to stabilize the school's student population. Once again though, Brentwood had proven itself to be a leader in the independent residential school system by providing a new approach to ensure a workable solution for challenging times.

To help co-ordinate the multitude of social, cultural and recreational activities which were now available and to better serve a rapidly expanding student population, the Student Advisory Council originally set up in 1970 was now reconstituted as the Student Activities Committee under the direction of teacher co-ordinator Nick Prowse. Very quickly the committee decided that in addition to serving the interests of the students through a self-help program designed to better utilize "boring free time," the school should become more fully involved in humanitarian ventures (biscuit and cheese lunches in aid of a Korean child through the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada) and local community volunteer services (youth counselling at Cedar Lodge School and shopping for shut-ins). Thanks to the untiring efforts of all its original student members, particularly Patrick Hogan, Margaret Allison, Laura Prefontaine and Sam Zien, the S.A.C. quickly became a valued and indispensable part of Brentwood life. Through the work of the S.A.C., the school became a better place to live in for all Brentwood students, and in the process there was established a strong tradition of service to the community, both inside and outside the school. The committee most definitely reflected a growing emphasis on student participation and volunteerism at Brentwood.



Rambling in action, 1975. One of Canada's first outdoor recreation programs.

This was the remarkable school that David Mackenzie had built in a mere fifteen years, when he was struck down with a brain aneurysm in December 1975. By any yardstick his accomplishment was a stupendous one, marred only by the debt load the school still carried, the price paid for an aggressive expansion program, and the costs of attracting the best teachers to develop a broad and complex educational syllabus. David Mackenzie was an “inspirational and charismatic leader” and the incredible “Mackenzie Stamp” showed up in every aspect of the school that he had created. However, enrollment stability and financial security remained elusive and it would be the task (and the achievement) of his successor, Bill Ross, finally to put this Mackenzie creation on a sound and secure footing in the years that followed.

At first, David Mackenzie was merely on sick leave and Assistant Headmaster Gil Bunch was appointed the interim Headmaster in his absence. Although the school’s founder was to return, briefly, in the summer term, it was really only to say farewell, since his health remained questionable and, on the advice of the doctors, he reluctantly resigned and Bill Ross was appointed as his successor. In his final address to the 1976 graduating class, David Mackenzie told the story of the old Brentwood and the new one that had picked up the torch. With characteristic modesty he said little about his own indispensable role in what was, undoubtedly, an amazing success story. Rather, in typical fashion he praised “the loyalty, devotion and sheer hard work of the masters, the staff, and the original boys of the new school,” and also “that group of Old Boys, without whom there might not have been a phoenix, a new Brentwood rising from the ashes.” It was left to others on that sad but proud day to pay appropriate homage to a true Brentwood icon. Ivor Ford, who had been with David Mackenzie for thirteen of the fifteen years, spoke for the Brentwood teachers. In a moving written tribute for the 1975–1976 *Brentonian* magazine, he concluded by repeating what he had said at the S.A.C.-organized Students’ Farewell Dinner, “Many will boast they attended Brentwood College. But you and I can boast we were at Brentwood while David Mackenzie was Headmaster.” For staff and students this was indeed the end of an era. “The Snowman” as he was affectionately known, because of his truly remarkable ability (particularly in those difficult, early years) to sell the idea of Brentwood to teachers, parents and students, was now passing the torch, but his presence would forever be felt around the campus he had built by “inspiring others with his own hopes.” Mr. Brian Bramall, Chairman of the Board of Governors at the time, perhaps summed up best what Brentwood College School really owed to David Mackenzie when he said, “his drive and leadership have been largely responsible for the growth and development of Brentwood over the last fifteen years, and he departs from his position as Headmaster leaving a heritage of excellence.” These words were reiterated at a farewell dinner given for David by the Old Brentonians at the Airport Inn in Vancouver, where the words “inspirational” and “innovative” were used a number of times during the evening to summarize David’s amazing achievement.



Mr. David D. Mackenzie with his wife, Joyce. Their partnership was a major driving force behind the successful refounding of Brentwood.

Chapter Eight: Old Values, New Ideas, 1976–1983

*"The vision to take a chance to tackle and overcome all difficulties,
and even to risk everything on a dream."*

Nick Prowse (teacher)

"Brentwood was reinvented."

Bill Ross (Headmaster)



Mr. William T. Ross, Headmaster, 1976–2000. A true visionary, Bill was the architect of today's Brentwood.

No one would deny that David Mackenzie had built, in a remarkably short space of time, a school that was now emerging as an established leader in Canadian independent school education. Yet for all that, he had remained essentially conservative and traditional at heart. Said Ivor Ford in his *Valete*, "In an age of relaxed morals, (David) often surprised us when his Calvinist streak showed through." His British public school background and his years of service, where he was influenced by the traditions of the Royal and later Canadian Navy, plus his Scottish Presbyterian heritage, meant that he was often genuinely shocked by the attitude and outlook of the present generation of young people. His accessibility to all at Brentwood, his willingness to listen, his always positive outlook, and his ability to improvise more often than not, hid his strict, sometimes even rigid, approach to education. He was essentially a builder rather than a visionary, and he was most certainly the right person, in the right place, at the right time. But now a "new-age" educator was needed if Brentwood was to deal successfully with the considerable challenges posed by the social and cultural revolution of the preceding decade. Luckily for all who believed in the school, the right Headmaster was found in the person of Bill Ross, who had been for a number of years unofficially fulfilling the key roles of Director of Studies and Senior Master.

Bill's background could not have been more different from David Mackenzie's. Born and raised in Prince George, where his father worked for the railway, he was educated at the local high school before proceeding to UBC to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree and a teaching diploma. He taught briefly in Nanaimo before joining the staff at Brentwood in September 1962. Originally hired (after an interview with a gentleman in canary-coloured cords, sweater and sunglasses — T. G. Bunch!) to teach mathematics and coach basketball (he started the program in 1963) and softball (as an alternative to cricket), Bill Ross soon found himself coaching rugby (a game new to him) and, later, a more familiar one — ice hockey in 1975. After Gil Bunch was appointed Assistant Headmaster in 1966, Bill Ross had increasingly taken over responsibility for the school's academic curriculum, particularly grade twelve, after the governors had expressed concern regarding the help and advice being given to senior students over post-secondary planning. In 1973, he moved into a senior administrative position when David Mackenzie formally appointed him Director of Studies and Senior Master. This promotion coincided with Bill Ross's election as Chairman of the Greater Victoria School Board (he had moved off campus to Victoria in 1965). In these two separate roles, he gained valuable administrative experience in the field of education, particularly in the areas of educational objectives, teacher relations and finances. His job in Victoria fortunately brought Bill in contact with Victoria's mayor, Hugh Stephen, who also happened to be an influential member of the Brentwood Board, most notably as Treasurer and later

Chairman. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Board of Governors decided that with such a well-qualified candidate within the school, they would not look beyond Brentwood in their search for David Mackenzie's successor.

For the first time, the new Brentwood had a Headmaster with both experience in, and strong ties to the British Columbia public school system. Not since the days when Mr. Hope was brought from Oak Bay High School to start Brentwood in 1923 had the school a Headmaster who was not moulded in his thinking by the customs and traditions of the British public school and its counterpart, the Canadian boys' private school. Even so, Mr. Hope himself had originally emigrated to Canada from Britain after completing a degree at Cambridge University.

With the timely arrival of Bill Ross as Headmaster, Brentwood was once again to become a leader in Canadian independent education. Under the guidance of this young, forward-looking and progressive educator and a largely new, more liberal Board of Governors, for the most part now shorn of its links to the old school and its time-honoured but outdated culture (Jim Genge, the last original governor resigned in 1980), Brentwood was ready to take another decisive step forward in its evolution as a leading educator of Canada's young people.

For several years, David Mackenzie had been struggling to find solutions to the very real issues that the school faced as the educational climate changed and the needs of the clientele demanded modifications to his essentially conservative approach to schooling. In an attempt to address these concerns, he had brought girls on to the campus, given greater prominence to music, and created a residence for seniors which provided more "home comforts" and amenities. Most recently, he and his staff had created an orientation program designed to ease a student's transition into the Brentwood lifestyle and way of doing things. In spite of these efforts, the school continued to fail to meet the needs of a sufficient number of students and to maintain a steady enrollment and a stable population. What was needed was a creative, new approach to education at Brentwood and this, David Mackenzie, given his own very traditional background and training, was struggling to provide. If the school was to increase its appeal to a new generation of young people and their parents, a thorough review of all programs, facilities and administrative systems was needed. There was nothing wrong with the basic concept upon which the school was built — the staff was generally strong and the core programs sound, but the conventional perception that independent schools contained a large number of students who were forced to attend by their parents (either because the children concerned were "a problem" or because their parents believed in the now largely outmoded ideas of the British public school) made Brentwood unattractive to an increasing number of its prospective customers. Bill Ross's mandate was clear — attract students who wanted to come and chose to stay. The consequences of failing to meet this objective were obvious, the successful solution was more complex. For Bill Ross, the considerable challenge each posed was made more difficult because of the peculiar and particular circumstances relating to his appointment as Headmaster.

Bill was first appointed to take up his new position on January 1st, 1976. At David Mackenzie's request, however, the effective date was moved to July 1st, 1976. David was angry at the Board of Governors who, he claimed, were using his illness to retire him as Headmaster because of his apparent inability to maintain revenues at a constant and sustainable level (by solving the problems of weak parent interest in the school and a high student attrition rate amongst those who did attend). Although



Tammie Morrison, Brentwood's first female head prefect, 1979.



Mr. Hugh Stephen, Board Treasurer and later Chairman. Hugh's advice and guidance were invaluable in the early years of Bill Ross's Headmastership.

effective cost controls implemented by long-time bursar, Len Crookston (1965–1983) and Board Treasurer Hugh Stephen had managed to bring an acceptable level of consistency to the school's finances after the difficulties and uncertainties of the early years, it was increasingly apparent by the early seventies that even Len's and Hugh's fiscal management policies were no longer enough in themselves to ensure the financial stability of the school. As recently as 1974, the staff had been asked if they were willing to accept a reduction in salary in order to keep the school viably solvent. Then an attempt to unionize the non-academic support staff early in 1977 further exacerbated Brentwood's budgetary concerns. A now urgent situation was made even worse by a rapidly growing deterioration in the relationship between the bursar and the Headmaster's office as the school's financial dilemma deepened. Because of these multiplying difficulties it became more and more evident that the school's monetary problems would only dissolve if and when Brentwood set out specifically to meet the needs of a greater number of students, thereby stabilizing enrollment and attracting a greater number of enquiries.

It was not surprising, therefore, that David Mackenzie's illness plus Bill Ross's current position as Chairman of the Greater Victoria School Board, during which time he had worked closely with Hugh Stephen and Glen Wall (also a member of the Brentwood Board) should have elevated Bill's status as a replacement for the ailing Headmaster. As far as the Board of Governors were concerned, he was not only knowledgeable in the field of educational financial management, but also had an evident understanding of curriculum issues. Most importantly, Bill had proven administrative abilities and leadership skills.

These exceptional qualities notwithstanding, Bill's appointment was not without controversy. Not only was there a continuing staff loyalty to an ailing, legendary former Headmaster, but also a majority of the house staff had made it clear that they did not support the Ross appointment, even informing the Board of Governors that they preferred that Gil Bunch be appointed and Bill Ross's appointment be rescinded. Thus, even before Bill began to implement his reforms, there was a serious split in the staff with regard to the future direction of the school.

It is a measure of Bill Ross's achievement that he was able to overcome this difficult start, quickly build new relationships and restore staff confidence, even whilst he tackled the contentious issues and concerns with which he had been appointed to deal. Indeed, within two years, he had achieved most of his objectives. On his own admittance though, Bill's first few months in his new role were difficult and lonely ones, whilst for many of the teachers and the students, the transition was filled with the numerous uncertainties generated by the inevitable missteps of an inexperienced Headmaster who was still feeling his way.

In spite of these growing pains, great progress was, in fact, made. First on the agenda was the new head's relationship with the bursar. Bill quickly redefined the role and with Len Crookston's full support, the Headmaster now became responsible for all matters educational and financial (a C.E.O., in fact). Once he had full control and accountability, Bill set out to make the school more accountable to both parents and students. To create a more stable, happier school population and reduce cynicism within the student body, he felt it was vital to improve the facilities, strengthen the teaching, expand the programs through the introduction of both variety and choice, improve communications with parents and make discipline procedures more accountable. Brentwood had to be for all Brentonians, not just those who were quick to respond to the school's ethos and outlook. Once a commitment was made to parents and a student accepted, Brentwood had to deliver the goods regardless of the chal-

allenges involved. To Bill Ross, the school simply had to justify its existence on a daily basis by offering a quality product that was attractive to a much broader range of students. This meant that it was important to make sure that the resources of the school community were used to further the growth of all the individuals within it, whilst at the same time nurturing group strength and upholding community standards.

Here was Bill's greatest leadership challenge — how to create an acceptable balance between these two approaches. In the past, the needs of the individual student had too often been subordinated to the requirements and goals of the school itself. To redefine this relationship was undoubtedly necessary if a happier, more stable student population was to be achieved, but to do so meant, above all else, adjusting the hierarchical structure of the school and redefining the code of discipline that supported it.

Hours of time were devoted to consultation with the house staff and teachers affected by Bill's changes prior to their implementation. Indeed, in an effort to be fair, perhaps there was too much discussion (some of it very contentious), often resulting in a lack of clear decisiveness in the face of serious social issues. Those concerned will never forget the arguments over the essentially ineffective fining system for alcohol offences and how to replace it, as well as the differences of opinion over the role of the prefects. Perhaps most contentious of all, the old issue of the smoke hole group and the new and urgent question of the senior centre — its function and purpose — needed to be quickly addressed.

Disagreement abounded and occasional mistakes certainly occurred, but out of these self-styled "learning opportunities" emerged a new approach to the time-honoured way things were done at Brentwood. In giving precedence to the rights and dignity of the individual as an initial response to any situation, Bill aroused the ire of some of the school's traditionalists, but with Gil Bunch immediately supportive of the changes Bill felt it was necessary to make, more and more of the teachers and students gradually came on side. Perhaps it was not surprising that resistance continued longest amongst certain elements of the house staff, since this important group were, from the beginning, far from united in what changes were really necessary and how they were to be implemented. The house parents had traditionally been allowed a fair degree of freedom in interpreting the rules as they related to their house members. Now they resented this interference with their freedom of action, as Bill tried to bring a greater level of integrity and conformity to the system of discipline, particularly as it related to the residential environment that was at the very heart of Brentwood. The occasional mixed messages that accompanied the perhaps overly long decision-making process sometimes resulted in a lively grade twelve group taking advantage of the unsettled situation that inevitably occurred. Thus it was a challenging time for all at Brentwood, students and teachers alike, as each group attempted to adjust to the Headmaster's new system of rules, conduct, conformity and order. No period of transition, however, is without its growing pains, and it is a measure of Bill Ross as a person and a leader that this critical stage (1976–1978), beset with so many difficulties and doubts, was in fact the beginning of a new direction and a new vision for the school.

Once the knotty and troublesome questions associated with these changes in leadership and philosophy were successfully out of the way, Bill Ross was able to implement some new plans for the academic administration of the school. Setting aside his predecessor's reluctance to establish an official middle management team he quickly filled the positions he, himself, had held unofficially for a number of years.



"Smoke hole," 1978. A contentious issue in Bill Ross's first two years as headmaster.



Mr. Jim Burrows, 1969–present,
Brentwood's longest-serving teacher.
Director of Studies, 1976–present.

He first appointed Jim Burrows as Director of Studies, and Nick Prowse as Senior Academic Adviser, thus freeing himself up to be a full-time headmaster. But it was definitely to be a new approach to the model of headmastering in the still tradition-dominated Canadian independent system. With the now willing support of the majority of his young teachers and the strong campus presence of Gil Bunch, Bill Ross set out to redefine the traditional concept of “Headmaster.” Not only would he continue to play a major role in the admissions process, interviewing almost every prospective student (as had his predecessor), he would also make it his business to know every student personally and his door would always be open. He made sure that every student knew that there was going to be an impartial, candid, and receptive approach with a direct line to the Headmaster. Although Bill himself had no previous house-parenting experience, he would henceforth spend more hours on campus than any other teacher. He would pride himself in being able to feel the pulse of the school, and to understand the hopes and concerns of each and every person on campus.

In the spring of 1981, senior student Derrick Hunter wrote a revealing article for the the *Brentonian* magazine in which he described the realities of attempting to see a Headmaster who was always available to everyone, whether that person be a teacher, a student, or a member of the kitchen staff:

I went to Mr. Ross' office at the appointed hour (for my interview) and, like anybody else who has ever had an appointment with Mr. Ross, found him in conference with someone else! Undaunted, I took a seat in the waiting room and began to read old magazines. Thirty-five minutes later Mr. Ross emerged . . . bid adieu to (his visitor) and I turned to him pen in hand, and was about to ask many provocative questions when I realized that I had written my assigned quota of words whilst waiting. I faced Mr. Ross apologetically and explained that I simply had no more word space, and would be back next month for his “Old Boys’ News.” Then I made another appointment!

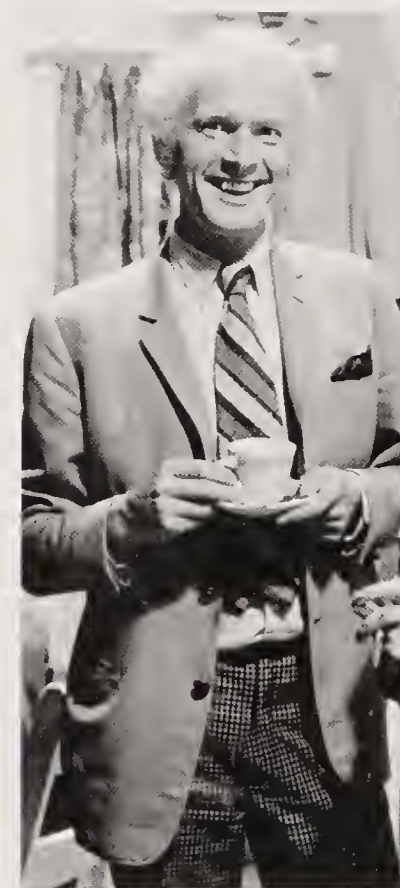
This easy-access approach to headmastering, though very successful in producing a happy, caring and productive environment based on genuine concern for each and every individual, also needed the strong hand of Gil Bunch as the dominant authority figure on campus to make this concept work in a residential school of over three hundred and fifty teenagers. It was this formidable partnership of two very different (but amazingly compatible) educators that created a dual vision that was unique in Canadian education. Gil was often up front and in your face, whilst Bill worked more quietly behind the scenes. Their contrasting styles, however, operated in perfect symmetry based upon a mutual respect. It was a rare phenomenon which is worth now looking at in more detail.

In the time-honoured tradition of Canada's greatest prime minister, John A. Macdonald, Bill was “Old Tomorrow” himself, always taking considerable time, care and thought in his everyday dealings with the students and staff (academic and service). Bill always knew where he was going, but he felt it was particularly important to spend time along the way to get to know the boys and girls under his care as well as promote the well-being of all on campus. His aim continuously was to encourage consideration for others based upon a willingness to listen, to learn and to understand. Only in this way could a caring community, built on mutual respect for each and every individual, be created. To those who had grown accustomed to the

more clear-cut and perhaps more quickly decisive days of the Mackenzie era, this new style still sometimes appeared to be rather time-wasting and hesitant, perhaps even occasionally irresolute and vacillating, but it worked. A strong sense of community soon emerged, with all its members now feeling valued and included. As far as the students were concerned, this new emphasis on all of them was reflected in an enrollment that began, at last, to remain steady throughout the year. For all the staff, pension revisions and equal pay for equal work reinforced their belief in a school that demanded long hours of dedicated commitment if it was to operate successfully. Brentwood was about to enter a new “golden age,” not seen since the seemingly simple, nostalgically unsophisticated and, for many, cosy intimacy of the pioneering days which came to an end with the social upheavals of the late sixties. It was indeed fortunate for everyone that another respected figure from that era, namely Gil Bunch, was also available to give this new philosophy incisiveness and credibility, through his forceful and commanding campus presence.

In many ways Gil was the absolute antithesis of Bill Ross. Yet they both shared a common perception of the Brentwood they wished to build, and each recognized the value of the other in creating a shared knowledge and understanding of what Brentwood could be. Many years later, in a moving tribute to Gil, renowned Canadian actor and Old Brentonian Geoff Bowes, who had been directed by Gil in the 1969 school production of *Billy Budd*, claimed that everything at Brentwood “began (and ended) with Gil Bunch.” Ever since his appointment to succeed Peter Clarke (who had decided to move back to the public school system in 1966) as Assistant Headmaster, Gil had been the strong, all-knowing presence striding the campus like a colossus, setting the tone, establishing the standards for others to follow, reaching into every nook and cranny with his own unique kind of flamboyant style, manner and rhetoric. Both revered and feared, he was always impossible to ignore! Whether it was through his infectious passion for English literature, his magic touch as a director, or his bold, almost outrageous, larger-than-life persona around the school, he greatly influenced every Brentonian for close to three decades. Every image of Brentwood contained Gil in it. Indeed it was, in every sense, Gil who took a hitherto young and brash Brentwood and moulded it in his own singular likeness. Through his stern but wise and patient approach and commanding presence, he helped Bill Ross to create a more refined and cultured campus with an emphasis on the intellectual rather than the physical alone. Through the power of his personality, Gil established qualities in the school that reflected his own aesthetic, cerebral vision. Under his tutelage the loud, sweaty athletes of yesteryear developed into the thoughtful, sophisticated students who helped create the kinder, more compassionate and tolerant school that was so close to his and Bill Ross’s hearts. Their approach may have been radically different, but Bill and Gil complemented each other perfectly in the successful pursuit of their common aims and objectives for Brentwood.

It can be truly said that after an uncertain start, the “Bill and Gil Show” transformed Brentwood from the replica of “an English public school, but with a special emphasis on Canadian requirements” to a progressive and innovative leader in Canadian independent education, ready to face the challenges of meeting the requirements of the post-sixties’ generation of baby-boomer parents. Central to this concept was the belief that the school must remain egalitarian in its character and approach. Although both of the school’s two leaders believed totally in the pursuit of excellence and the promotion and maintenance of high standards, indeed their philosophy of “if it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing well” pervaded all endeavours at Brentwood, neither gave any credence to élitism as such. Rather, both believed (and in this they were strongly supported by



Mr. T. Gil Bunch, Assistant Headmaster, 1966–1990. Everything at Brentwood “began and ended with Gil Bunch.”



Sir Michael Butler, Chairman of the Board of Governors, 1983–1985. His primary objective was the creation of a bursary program.

the Board of Governors) that what the school had to offer should be made available to all students, regardless of their own individual prowess or their parents' financial circumstances or social position. The only criteria for selection should be an ability to handle the rigorous academic syllabus, and a willingness to be fully involved in the school's demanding tripartite program.

Thus, the creation of bursaries rather than scholarships (though there were a few available through annual competitive examinations) became the primary objective of Sir Michael Butler (who succeeded Hugh Stephen as Chairman of the Board of Governors in 1983) and Headmaster Bill Ross. These were to be awarded to students who "qualify strongly for the school but come from families where the financial burden of the school's tuition fees must be eased before the family can accept the cost." They were to be awarded on a continuing basis, as long as the recipient made reasonable academic progress and contributed to the school through fine citizenship and enthusiastic participation in the school's co-curricular programs. By the early eighties, there were thirty-four students benefiting from bursary awards, ranging from grants of \$1,000 to \$3,450. These funds came from many different sources and resulted from the generosity of families and friends of the school, as well as from donations, such as the Old Brentonians' Society, the family of the late Dillon Williams who attended the original school from 1923–1928 and later was a member of the original Board of Governors which started Brentwood up again in 1961, and Mr. and Mrs. Dawson of Calgary in memory of their son, Brent, who graduated from the school in 1970.

Not surprisingly, a very different Brentwood was to emerge during the first few years of the Ross era. For the first time, the school had at its helm a home-grown Headmaster who was not overly influenced by the conventional, standard, private-school traditions based upon an outmoded and rigid philosophy that had little meaning for the post-sixties' generation of Canadians. Under Bill Ross, Brentwood was the first independent school in British Columbia to offer a genuine alternative to the provincial school system without looking back to the mother country as a source of inspiration. Although many of the young teachers were still United Kingdom educated and trained, they nevertheless gave their firm support to their new head as he promoted his fresh ideas — ideas that were to lay the foundations of today's school.

All the changes in fact came faster than most people realized at the time, largely because these teachers (most of whom had been recruited during the sixties and early seventies) threw themselves wholeheartedly behind Bill's innovative ideas. The fact is this talented and committed group liked each other, liked the school, and soon bought in to what Bill and Gil were attempting to create. The result was a wonderful spirit and a remarkable chemistry, as well as a great deal of excitement as both staff and students responded positively and enthusiastically to the challenges and changes. In retrospect, what Bill Ross and his young teachers achieved in those early years of his long headship were so remarkable that the lasting benefits of the period far outweigh any temporary difficulties that were caused by questions concerning Bill's appointment and his transforming ideas.

Inevitably, some students continued to complain that many of the rules and restrictions were too trivial and these grievances, plus the rigid hierarchical structure left over from the early days of Brentwood, were (they claimed) too repressive and

constraining, but even so, few would deny that the school was actually becoming more democratic and inclusive. Though the old issues of “not enough outlets for self-expression” and “too much conformity” were occasionally voiced, Bill Ross made it clear that he was always open to different opinions and he made no secret of the fact that he wished to end anything that he saw as anachronistic. The difficulty (as he found in his first year in particular) was implementing necessary reform without too much disruption and upset along the way. In this regard, Gil Bunch would stand tall in defence of the old customs, whilst the Headmaster leaned sympathetically towards “new ideas and new freedoms.” It was this marvellous combination which ensured that the changes, when they came, were both timely and orderly.

The most obvious modification involved a progressive revision of the school’s traditional five “R’s” philosophy. Although the conventional three (reading, writing and (a)rithmetic) remained at the core of the educational program, greater variety in the academic offerings was soon accompanied by a more balanced and well-rounded curriculum that reduced the traditional position of pre-eminence of the two remaining “R’s” (rugby and boys’ rowing) in the tripartite program, in order to appeal to a broader cross-section of students, both male and female. The latter, in particular, now needed more opportunities and a higher profile within the school since the decision in 1978 to accept girls (in grade ten in addition to the two senior grades) had raised the female numbers to over eighty (approximately one quarter of the school).

The breakthrough years for the school’s female athletes were 1979 to 1982. They began with volleyball. With the arrival on staff of Rick Piechotta in 1978, volleyball emerged as a legitimate rival to field hockey for the school’s female athletes in the first term. In only his second year, Rick took the Brentwood Volleyball Team to the provincial championships after an unprecedented third-place finish in the Vancouver Island playoffs. Grade eleven student Betty Glen was voted onto both the Island and the Provincial All Star teams. The performance of this outstanding group clearly established girls’ volleyball as a major Brentwood sport, a tradition that was to be carried on by Rick’s successors Mike Stang and, currently, Shrawan Khanna. Meanwhile, not to be outdone, the girls’ field hockey XI reached the provincial playoffs for the first time in 1980. Under the inspired captaincy of Anne Evamy, and the patient coaching of Howard Martin (who, at last, had a reasonable pool of talent to draw from), they finished eighth in the B.C. High School Championships, no mean achievement given the size of many of the other public high schools against which they were competing. Here, once again, having established a tradition of success, the girls’ field hockey team was henceforth to make the Island and provincial tournaments almost every year, including a memorable provincial title in 1985. This exceptional team, captained by Eryn Patterson, lost only once during a season in which they played thirty-one games. One member of this eleven, Gillian Szamosi, is today coach of Brentwood’s greatest rival, Cowichan High School, which has already won several B.C. titles under her guidance and direction. It is a great tribute to Howard, the girls’ field hockey coach for thirty years, that it was a rare year indeed when his team did not reach the provincial finals and finish in the top half of the tournament. In



Top: Girls come into their own — the 1979 volleyball team.

Above: The 1985 1st XI field hockey team, provincial champions.



Girls 59 kg coxed four Canadian High School Champions, 1980. Brentwood's first female national title holders.

addition, a number of his players were to go on to play at the varsity level, as well as represent their province and their country.

In this golden era, the girls also broke the boys' stranglehold on success in rowing. Thanks to the hard work and perseverance of coach Susan Garvey, the female rowers went from being the "poor sisters" of the male-dominated Brentwood rowing club to Canadian champions! Susan's 59 kg coxed four became the first Brentwood female athletes to win a national championship when they won gold at the 1980 Canadian High School Championships in St. Catharine's. This success was quickly built on when Susan's successor, Kevin Cook, coached the Brentwood junior women's eight, junior women's coxed four, and the junior women's lightweight coxed four to gold in St. Catharine's in 1983. Not surprisingly, this period saw two female athletes from Brentwood, Bonnie Robinson (in 1981) and Marty Boan (in 1983), join a long line of male athletes including Kyle Marsh, Dale Bannerman and Tom Pankratzall in 1979 and Tim Christian in 1981, in winning a Nancy Greene Scholarship. This prestigious award, which recognized superior athletic ability combined with solid scholastic achievement and conscientious community service, was given by the provincial govern-

ment to outstanding students from throughout the British Columbia school system (public and private) and provided \$1,000 towards university tuition.

The increase in the prominence and success of girls' programs in sports was matched by a similar level of prestige and achievement in the fine arts. Once again it was sparked not only by increased female numbers, but also the timely arrival of another outstanding young teacher. Ever since 1972, girls had contributed greatly to the music program (choral and instrumental), but now they were to play a prominent role with instructor Joyce MacLean in establishing one of the first and most creative dance programs in the province. Joyce brought with her (from England) considerable experience with the Inner London Education Authority in developing and teaching dance as an integral part of the school curriculum. She very quickly created a sophisticated and challenging program that attempted to look at dance as "an area of the arts which has inherent academic disciplines, techniques, functions, and which, because of the nature of the medium of human movement, has clear relationships with other art forms and with the whole basis of human behaviour." With this valuable addition to the performing arts, Brentwood was now able to move confidently into the production of large-scale, modern, mega-musicals. The first two — *Oklahoma* (1980) and *Guys and Dolls* (1981) were for Gil Bunch, "the fulfilment of something which had dwelt dormant in my spirit for fifteen years," and his inspirational and extravagant direction, combined with Joyce MacLean's choreography, the discipline and style of her dancers, as well as the professionalism of the singers, ably coached by Robert Cooper (Director of Music), ensured the success of this challenging venture. Indeed, this was the beginning of a long line of similar triumphs for this unique and potent triumvirate. In the process, they established an enviable tradition that was to be maintained through to today's lavish annual musical theatre productions. More immediately, the value and success of the dance program was assured when Lindsay Dutton was selected to present her stunning interpretative dance *Stages* to the full assembly at the University of Victoria's Symposium of the Sciences and Humanities in May 1979. Shortly afterwards, the University of Alberta recognized the school's dance program as a locally developed fine art that could be used for entrance purposes.

Perhaps the most tangible evidence of the school's pioneering commitment to residential co-education (rather than the popular notion of a boys' private school with a few girls allowed in the senior grades) was the appointment in 1979 of Tammie Morrison as Brentwood's first female head prefect. Known affectionately as "Mother Goose," Tammie embodied all that was best about the kind of strong but compassionate and caring leadership Bill Ross wished to establish on campus. Through her gender, as well as her thoughtfulness and consideration, she gave both a traditional interpretation and a new meaning to her role and, in the process, she quietly revolutionized the way Brentonians looked at each other and their campus. There is no doubt that the increasing presence of girls on campus, Tammie's fresh, novel management style, and the growth in complexity and prominence of the fine arts and activities program all played a key role in building the forward-looking tripartite approach to education that was so close to the hearts of Bill Ross and his dedicated staff.

That all this was achieved in such a short space of time, without weakening Brentwood's two customary and sustaining "R's" (rugby and rowing) is a tribute to all those who were involved in the process. Tony Carr might complain that the hours of training he needed to maintain a consistently high level of performance at the national level were now much harder to come by, and Ivor Ford and Nick Prowse might bemoan the loss of two terms of rugby and the resultant difficulty in upholding Brentwood's longstanding reputation as a provincial leader in the sport, but the fact is that this era continued to see some outstanding performances from these two traditional giants amongst Brentwood's sports offerings.

In rugby, the 1st XV's of 1976 and 1977 were amongst the very best in the school's history. Captained successively by two of Brentwood's most talented players, lock Marius Felix and scrum-half Kyle Marsh, both teams were denied the kind of recognition they deserved and which would have put them on a par with the "Invincibles" of 1966–1967 because of some unusual circumstances and difficulties. Marius's XV won the B.C. Independent Schools' Championship, but lost in the B.C. High School semi-finals to a badly outplayed Point Grey XV when a winning convert from in front of the posts inexplicably went wide. Kyle's XV, after several lopsided victories, finally lost the Independent Schools' title when they were forced to play a four-point game against St. George's without three of their leading players. They then met a similar fate in the B.C. High Schools final, losing to a talented, but also much fresher and more rested Magee XV (Brentwood had only a twenty-minute pause to rest and recuperate after a very rugged semi-final match against Mountain Secondary from Langley). Also in this period, three Old Brentonians, Ro Hindson, Pat Trelawny and Dwaine van Eeuwen (later joined by Tony Arthurs, Marius Felix, Michael Holmes and Richard Attisha), were selected to represent Canada on overseas tours. Ro, in particular, emerged as a world-class player who won over thirty "caps" for Canada during a long and distinguished playing career, which included being selected to play for the Rest of the World XV against Ireland. (At the time of publication [September 2002], Gregor Dixon had been Canada's seven-a-side rugby captain at the recent Manchester Commonwealth Games, and Sean Fauth was playing for the Canada XV in qualifying matches for the 2003 Rugby World Cup).

Meanwhile, not to be outdone, the rowing club grew during this period to over one hundred members even though, unlike rugby, this was a purely elective sport. The Brentwood Regatta had also emerged as a major west coast sporting event involving almost one thousand high school athletes from British Columbia and the west coast of the United States. In addition, the school's crews were now dominating at the local and provincial level, and at the national level the boys matched the



Lindsay Dutton and Michael Martin, 1978. The introduction of a dance program helped create a more balanced and well-rounded curriculum.



Top: Blair Horn, stroke, Canadian Men's Eight, Gold Medallist in the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, USA.

Above: Darren Barber, 4 seat, Canadian Men's Eight, Gold Medallist at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, Spain.

recent success of the girls by winning Canadian titles in 1978 (Lightweight Eight) and 1982 (Senior Heavy Eight, Junior Eight and Senior Lightweight Eight) to go with several second-place and third-place finishes in most of the major categories. Inevitably, Brentwood rowers were bound to attract the attention of the Canadian Rowing Association and, in the summer of 1983, members of the school's 1st VIII formed the nucleus of Canada's team at the World Youth Championships in Vichy, France. This representation at the international level achieved by current Brentwood students followed immediately on the success of Old Brentonian oarsmen at the Pan-Am Games in 1979 and again in the summer of 1983 (Pat Walter, Greg Hood, David Wilkinson and Marius Felix won medals in 1979 and Tim Christian, David Ross, Daryl Oakley, Blair Horn and Paul Tessier in 1983). In this latter summer, Sarah Ogilvie became Brentwood's first female to row in a world championship. Sadly, all these fine athletes were denied the opportunity to join Jim Henniger (Montreal, 1976) as Brentwood's Olympians when Canada boycotted the Moscow Games in 1980. Subsequently, though, a number of Brentwood oarsmen, including several of those mentioned above, represented their country in the next five Olympic Summer Games with Blair Horn (Los Angeles, 1984) and Darren Barber (Barcelona, 1992) winning gold for Canada in the Eights event, and Bruce Ford (Los Angeles, 1984), a bronze in the Quad. Sarah Ogilvie, in 1988, became Brentwood's first female Olympian and several of the school's total of eighteen male Olympians were selected for more than one Olympic Games (Darren Barber, Bruce Ford and David Ross) whilst Harold Backer represented his country at an amazing three consecutive Olympics (1984, 1988, 1992). If Canada had not boycotted the Moscow Olympics in 1980, these numbers would have been even more impressive. Surely, these incredible achievements are unmatched by any school anywhere and are a lasting tribute to coaches Tony Carr and John Queen and the unparalleled élite lightweight and heavyweight programs they built up and established in those years.

As mentioned previously, these continued successes in rugby and rowing must always be viewed in the context of the times, and in doing so it makes a mockery of accusations by several of Brentwood's rivals that an over-emphasis on the school's two traditional and longest-established sports created an uneven program that seriously disadvantaged the average student. In fact, even as these accomplishments were raising the profile of Brentwood across the province and the country, a myriad of other programs were offering similar challenges to a wide range of interested students. In addition to drawing and painting, the visual arts now included pottery, photography, drafting, weaving and silk screening, and Brentwood artists were being exhibited around the province as part of the B.C. Young Artists' Exhibition. This wide range of choices was also present in the performing arts where, in addition to drama (straight plays and musical theatre) and creative dance, over one hundred students were involved in the band and choral programs. Once again there were frequent opportunities to perform before a wider audience both inside and outside the school gates.

In this regard in particular, Robert Cooper's exciting and stimulating music program became increasingly high profile and really showed, when given these opportunities to showcase its many talented performers, how far it had come since Robert had inherited John Boel's limited but pioneering instrumental program in 1973. In looking at the many talented young musicians who passed through Robert Cooper's hands from Benjamin Butterfield (voice) to Jason Oh (violin), Nicholas McLean (trumpet) and Jenny Fok (piano,) it was no accident that the last three all emerged at the end of Robert's tenure, for by that time the strength of the program was attracting very gifted students. In the early days, it had been no easy task to promote music, particularly singing, in a school dominated by sports, but Jimmy Johnson initially and then Robert Cooper had done it,

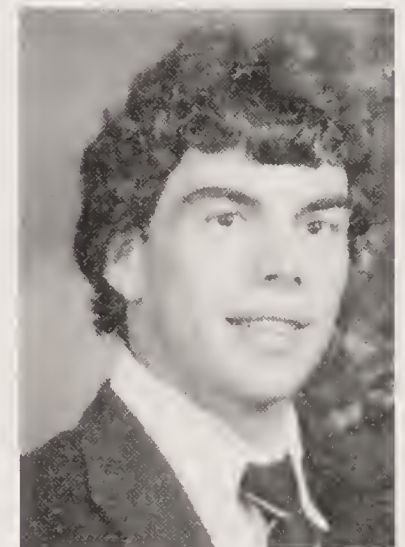
like Joyce MacLean later, through the strength of their personalities and their passion and enthusiasm for their subject. By quickly attracting a broad cross-section of students, the programs became mainstream, adding enormously to the vitality of the rapidly growing fine arts portion of the expanding tripartite syllabus. To attend the brilliant musical evenings in today's school is to witness the fruits of their labour.

Clashes between programs were inevitable, but the spirit of compromise and co-operation was strong. This, combined with the unflagging energy and enthusiasm of the students (who were obliged to select at least two fine arts as part of the tripartite syllabus), made for a busy, productive school that set the standard for the years to come. Amazingly enough, in the midst of all this frenetic activity, the building of the Mill Bay Community Ice Arena allowed two more sporting activities, ice hockey and curling, to be added to the choice of sports in the second term, now that rugby had surrendered its supremacy. The two games, however, that really benefited from this new era of diversity were soccer and basketball. Although the former still suffered from being played outside the high school season, it was a popular sport which, under the expert coaching of John Garvey, soon produced teams that started to dominate the Independent Schools' competition. The story was a very different one in basketball, any attempt to run a viable program meant playing at the height of the high school season and attempting to survive in the very competitive local league. After a brief period of success in the sixties, thanks mainly to the presence of some very talented individual players, the game had not been able to survive side by side with a compulsory rugby program. Now Bill Ross's Canadian heritage, plus his desire to raise the school's profile locally in B.C.'s premier high school sport, led to the hiring of Steve Cowie (a history teacher by profession) to build the school's basketball program once again. After a year testing the school's proficiency in the Independent Schools' League, Brentwood made a successful re-entry into the local high school league and before long was a competitive participant in local competition and occasionally regional playoffs for medium-sized high schools. The girls (coached by Steve and Stacey Sainas) also began to make an impact at the zone and Island level, and basketball was once again a recognized, if not a major, Brentwood sport.

Another athletic activity that enjoyed a brief revival in this period was track and field. Ultimately, this demanding sport was unable to compete with the continuing popularity of tennis (both recreational and competitive) and rowing. In the former, the school team enjoyed a level of success commensurate with Brentwood's oarsmen and established a tradition of excellence which would culminate in several Independent Schools' titles and no less than three British Columbia High School titles twenty years later. Track and field, however, did not survive becoming a voluntary sport. Briefly though, during a splendid swansong, there emerged the two greatest male and female track athletes in the history of the school, Mark Williamson (400 m) and Susan Holt (3,000 m). Both performed consistently at a top provincial level, but the former literally took Canada by storm when, in 1980, as a grade ten student, he won the 400 metres at the B.C. High School Championships in the second-fastest time ever (a feat he repeated in 1981), and then followed this amazing achievement with a gold medal performance in the same event at the Canada Games later that summer. Mark was also a fine rugby player who scored a record thirty-one tries for the 1st XV in his two years on the left wing. Subsequently, he attended the University of Washington on a track scholarship and also ran for Canada in several international competitions. Almost forgotten in the aura of excitement that surrounded Mark's unbelievable accomplishments was the highest-ever, fourth-place finish of the boys' team at the B.C.'s. Apart from the annual interhouse competition, track and field was never again to enjoy so much of the spotlight at



Mr. Robert Cooper, Director of Music, 1973–2001. His enthusiasm attracted a broad cross-section of students.



Mark Williamson won the 400 metres at the B.C. High School Championships and a gold medal at the Canada Games in 1980.



By 1979 the school had one of the strongest sailing programs in B.C.

Brentwood. A victim of the new multi-choice, diverse Brentwood program, its demise was mourned by many of the school's veteran teachers and Old Brentonians.

Even as basketball and soccer (together with Steve Wynne's long-established, cross-country running program) began to fulfill Bill Ross's desire for a more diversified sports curriculum and show that Brentwood was no longer a one-winter-sport school, sailing was emerging as a worthy challenger to the rowing club's previous domination of the waterfront. Although sailing on the ideal waters of Mill Bay and the Saanich Inlet had been an important school activity since Brentwood's opening in 1961, it was Victor Lironi (a geography teacher by profession, as well as a highly qualified and accomplished sailor in his own right) who built a successful, multi-layered program in which there was room for the recreational sailor, as well as the student who wished to take instruction and/or sail competitively. By 1979, he had built one of the strongest programs in the province and had produced a world-class junior sailor, Michael Mills, who competed successfully at the provincial, national and international levels.

Although Bill Ross was constantly reinforcing the idea that education at Brentwood was much more than what was achieved in the classroom, academics obviously continued to be ultimately Brentwood's *raison d'être*. Brentwood was, above all else, a university preparatory institution, and the success of its graduates in gaining entry to the universities of their choice was of paramount importance. To facilitate this required not only good preparation in the junior grades and strong teaching at the senior level, but also excellent counselling and planning procedures to ensure that each senior knew his/her own strengths and weaknesses, and what was available in order to become a knowledgeable consumer. Building on the previous efforts of Bill Ross, Nick Prowse set up a broad-based academic counselling service that more than met the growing expectations of the students. The results of all this were that, in a school district in which five schools competed for available provincial scholarships, Brentwood consistently won more than fifty percent of them. In addition, the majority of the graduating class (including an increasing number of entrance and national scholarship winners) were obtaining early entry, based on their mid-year marks, to universities across North America, including Ivy League colleges like Harvard and Princeton, as well as eastern Canadian universities such as Queens and Western Ontario, and numerous west coast ones such as UBC, UVIC, Stanford, and the University of Washington in Seattle (a mecca for a number of Brentwood's rowers, many on athletic scholarships).

These increasing academic successes were also secured through the often unheralded efforts of Jim Burrows, the Director of Studies. In the same way as Nick Prowse had taken over the academic advising mantle from Bill Ross in 1977, Jim had inherited his vital but unglamorous role from the newly appointed Headmaster at the same time. He was responsible (with John Garvey) for producing a workable academic timetable, as well as handling all the school's dealings with the B.C. Ministry of Education. Through his quiet, but efficient and untiring efforts, the students were relieved of the responsibility of dealing with the frustrating minutiae associated with any bureaucratic governmental organization. Thanks to Nick and Jim, the students could actually concentrate on studying! In fulfilling this commitment for almost thirty years, in addition to all his other responsibilities as teacher, coach and house assistant, Jim has exemplified and stood for the kind of loyal, dedicated service

that makes Brentwood the school it is today. As Brentwood's longest-serving teacher (since 1964), his influence on the school's development has been inestimable.

Meanwhile, many of the top academic students continued to give their very limited free time away from the demanding tripartite program to such intellectual pursuits as debating and public speaking. Under the able leadership of historian Rob MacLean, debating in particular enjoyed a spectacular revival after some rather moribund years following the golden age of Wade Davis and Graham Vink. That Rob was able to keep this purely voluntary and untimetable activity alive and prospering (through a succession of legendary lunch-time meetings) was a great tribute to him and his many dedicated debaters, beginning with Ruth Buchanan and continuing with such stalwarts as Rebecca Day, Simon Monckton and Leslie Szamosi. They established a high level of competence and commitment that has lasted through to today. Meanwhile, the Mathematics Department continued to uphold the academic honour of the school with consistently strong performances in the Canadian Mathematics Competition particularly in 1981 when, led by Donald Stanley (ranked fifth amongst all grade tens in Canada), the school finished first in B.C. and fourteenth nationally.

In the midst of all the hectic hustle and bustle of a school on the move and very much bound up in the excitement of constructing an educational philosophy unique among Canada's schools, there were those who felt that there was too much emphasis on "doing" and not enough on "reflection." The idea that only through active involvement could each person be their best, and a strong sense of community created, was paramount. Too often, this did not leave enough time for individual thought, comment and retrospection. Certainly, in spite of all the changes that had taken place, Brentwood remained a very hierarchical organization in which student input and contribution to the methods and objectives that drove the philosophy and guiding principles of this era of change remained very limited and superficial. Many of the students felt that in the process of producing "well-rounded individuals who have tasted success, and are prepared in every way possible for successful lives," there was not enough opportunity for individuality and non-conformity, for the exploring of alternatives and testing of limits. As one president of the Student Activities Committee cynically remarked during these exciting times, "Our goal was to see the establishment of a Utopian society. However, we failed. In attempting to undermine the existing reign of oppression, we were able to initiate several social reforms. Those took the form of dances, social outings and movies (which, in fact, were censored, proving that our ultimate goal was not achieved!). Perhaps future committees will, like knights in shining armour, be able to uphold the ideals of freedom and democracy!"

Only in the nineties would Brentwood's structure slowly begin to reform and change, and the students become much more initiators of change rather than merely participants in the process. In reality, this third phase in Brentwood's development was, in fact, only possible after the completion of the first two — the pioneering stage followed by the forming and fashioning stage. Until the school itself knew clearly what it wished to create, allowing total involvement in the process was perhaps unrealistic.

For the fresh, open-minded and enterprising Brentwood teachers, the first decade of Bill Ross's administration was a magical, if also exhausting time. This was the heyday of their teaching careers, a time when the future was full of promise and everything and anything seemed possible, and it was this élan that rubbed off on the students and produced the high level of



Donald Stanley, 1980–1983, an outstanding mathematician.



Mr. Steve Wynne, 1973–2000, led the Inter-School Christian Fellowship on campus for 26 years.

energy, optimism and spirit that fired every commitment, every action. To the school of today there is something rather old-fashioned and even naïve about those times, but the Brentonians who lived through them will never forget them, whether they were teachers or students. The young, by their very nature, will always kick against any restraints imposed upon them, and there were those amongst the student body who resented the school's numerous rules and regulations that imposed an established order and discipline upon them, but the vast majority of them still remember those days with warmth and affection and see them as critical in their evolution into responsible, effective citizens.

Another area in which some criticism has been levelled against the Brentwood that grew out of the eighties is its failure to adequately administer to the spiritual needs of its students. In spite of the fact that the original Brentwood was very much an Anglican institution with the chapel built by the boys and in every sense the centre of school life, there was little attempt to recreate this concept in the new school at Mill Bay. Although students were always encouraged to attend the church of their choice, and major religious occasions were recognized through school-run services, Brentwood never had a full-time chaplain (from time to time there were part-time ones), and there was never any attempt to build a chapel as the old school had done. In recent years, efforts to move the old school chapel to the present campus have always faltered, much to the chagrin of many Old Brentonians, particularly those who attended the Brentwood Bay campus.

To say, however, that the spiritual side of a student's life at Brentwood was completely ignored would not only be inaccurate, but would also do a great disservice to the work of Steve Wynne and the Inter-School Christian Fellowship he founded on campus in 1974, the year after his arrival at the school from Cochrane in Alberta. This voluntary group which grew from the original seven to two dozen or more of both sexes from all grades in the space of less than five years, met regularly for Bible study, discussion and fellowship. Over hot chocolate and cookies at the Wynne home, originally on campus as Steve was the housemaster of Ellis House for eight years, they discussed the Christian life and, with the help of some talented musicians, sang inspirational songs. By affiliating with the world-wide parent organization, the students gained access to excellent personnel in Victoria, to Pioneer Pacific Camp on Thetis Island, and Pioneer Chehalis in the Hemlock Valley.

In retrospect, these challenging and memorable years between 1976 and 1983 were, in both their strengths and weaknesses, the bridge between the early Brentwood that looked back to the original school and an external educational philosophy for inspiration, and the present Brentwood that was decidedly more home-grown in outlook and embraced the new educational realities of the twenty-first century. In this realm of infinite possibilities that blossomed under Bill Ross and Gil Bunch, the foundations were laid for the Brentwood of tomorrow, but if the school was to continue to meet the needs of the students, teachers and parents who made up the Brentwood family, the existing facilities needed to be upgraded and improved. The school could not maintain its reputation as a leading exponent of independent education in Canada without a building plan for the future. Bill Ross had successfully established a firm financial base, reinvigorated the student numbers and then steered the school through a critical further stage in its development, but now, in order to sustain this growth, he was going to have to overcome a further challenge — replacing an old, crumbling, outdated plant that still too much bore the stamp of the old solarium. The remainder of the eighties would be spent primarily in fulfilling this timely and necessary goal.

Chapter Nine: A Plan for the Future, 1983–1989

“Brentwood’s new buildings . . . will result in a more fully integrated campus, serving to enhance the sense of community and involvement essential to the Brentwood experience.”

Bill Ross (Headmaster)

In the fall of 1978, the Headmaster and the Board of Governors put together an ambitious plan to meet the current and future needs of the school, which was finally confirmed and approved in 1981. Through a combination of renovations and new construction, the aim was to upgrade the physical plant and develop a campus that would more accurately reflect the needs and aspirations of a school moving rapidly towards the demands of the new millennium. Brentwood had relied for too long on a considerable number of buildings that either were outmoded and inadequate even when the school opened in 1961, or were cheap additions fabricated in the early days of struggle. In particular, the main school building, including the gymnasium, was no longer able to meet the demands being placed upon it. Badly needed was a larger, upgraded library, a new, fully equipped science centre, a modern audio-visual centre, an attractive and more contemporary girls’ dormitory, an expanded rowing centre and a multi-sport athletic complex. Inevitably, all this was going to cost a lot of money (the original projected cost was just under \$7,000,000) and it was therefore preceded by a fund drive, led by Bill Ross. In order to avoid as much as possible any serious campus disruption and possible debt load, construction would be carried out in stages, commencing with the new Mackenzie House in 1982, followed by the Sports Complex in 1985 and finally the Academic Centre (including new administrative space) in 1988.

In February 1983, forty-four female students moved to the new residence. These girls came from three separate buildings. Twenty-eight moved from a dilapidated but homey Hilton (not much changed since the original Ellis House of the sixties). Eleven girls moved from the suddenly “old” Mackenzie that had been the original Headmaster’s accommodations for David Mackenzie and his family. Bill Ross and his family had moved to the refurbished residence on the Wilson property to the north of the campus after the school purchased the once-again available site in 1976. Finally, five girls came from the intimate, but somewhat distant, Patterson House (on the corner of Solarium Road and Mill Bay Road, opposite the southwest corner of “A” Field). The mid-term move proved challenging logistically, but the new house which, at 2:00 p.m. Friday afternoon, had just bare rooms, became, by 9:00 p.m. that same night, a residence “full of clothes, posters, colourful bedspreads, stereos, books, photographs, hammocks, stuffed animals, sports gear, teapots, popcorn makers, curling irons, bicycles, and all the memorabilia that gave personal significance to the individual rooms.” It was the first residence constructed that was part of an overall campus plan, and its modern design and luxurious interior was in marked contrast to the utilitarian but severe and frugal design of the older boys’ houses built in the years following the school’s opening. This first, striking creation of the architectural firm of Wade Williams of Victoria, which had been hired to develop an integrated and comprehensive building plan to



Top: Construction of Mackenzie House beginning in 1982.

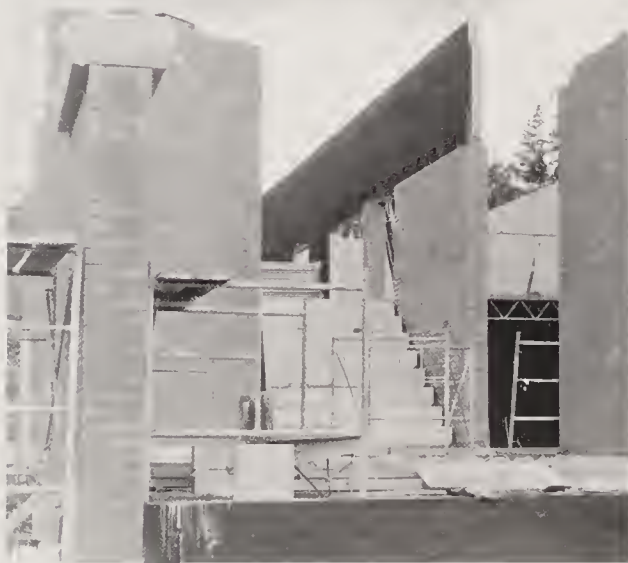
Above: The new Mackenzie House which completed phase one of the building program in 1983.



meet Brentwood's specific future needs, may have lacked the much-loved nooks and angularities of its sister residence, Alex House, but it very much represented the new Brentwood. The building's clean, tiered lines rising out of the gently sloping site, with its spacious foyer, wide conversation areas in the corridors, extensive use of windows and airy skylights in the stairwells and, above all else, its wide terrace (which afforded unobstructed views of the bay and surrounding campus), spoke more of an elegant resort than a school dormitory. This was, in every sense, the wave of the future. A beautiful, thriving, and forward-looking school was emerging like a butterfly out of the chrysalis of the old campus and traditional ideas, with buildings to match its ambitious, innovative programs. An independent survey in the 1980s, conducted over a period of a week, had rated Brentwood highly in every category but one — an inadequacy of many of the buildings. Now a carefully staged and smooth transition from existing to new facilities was being carried out with an emphasis on a minimum of disruption in school activities.

The next step was an athletic complex that not only provided first-class facilities for the traditional indoor Brentwood sports (basketball, badminton and volleyball), but also included squash courts, a weight-training room, equipment rooms, extensive changing facilities, and, on the outside, a climbing wall on the front (east side). A newly cleared and levelled space at the back (west side) provided a much-needed extra field for outdoor games. In addition, spectators were catered to for the very first time at Brentwood, with pull-out bleachers to accommodate four hundred onlookers. Altogether, it was a tremendous facility in the same eye-catching design as its predecessor, Mackenzie House. This state-of-the-art complex which was built largely through the generosity of Old Brentonians, led by the Woodward family after which it was named, now provided an opportunity for the sports program to diversify in the way envisaged by Bill Ross when the school first started to move away from the narrow confines of the original games philosophy. Within five years, it was to become a focal point of the 1991 B.C. Winter Games hosted by the Duncan/North Cowichan Region of Vancouver Island. The free publicity for the school was priceless, and clearly established Brentwood as a modern and progressive leader in local education, but more was to come.

The final stage of this Brentwood Campus Development Plan gained a historic third dimension when construction began in November 1987 on the new Academic Centre. Once again a dramatic Terry Williams architectural project was going not only to continue the exciting era of redevelopment on the Brentwood campus, but also provide a new stunning and dominating silhouette on the shores of Mill Bay. It was the climax of an intense program to improve the campus which was, and probably still is, for a school of Brentwood's size, at this comparatively young stage of its development, unparalleled in Canada. Certainly it



Phase two — the Sports Complex under construction, 1985.

was the phase most fraught with difficulty as, for the first time, the staff and students would have to be moved into temporary quarters, since the new facility could not be started until the old main building had been demolished. After a wonderfully nostalgic moment when the wrecking ball reduced the old hospital structure to matchwood in a matter of minutes, the staff and students moved cheerfully for the next eight months into an Atco village erected on the old tennis courts in front of Whittall House. Amidst some noise, dislocation and dirt, everybody witnessed the gradual rise of a building that would give

Brentwood much-needed new laboratories, classrooms, a lecture theatre, library, administrative offices, and boathouse as well as a truly lovely waterfront deck and plaza.

Impressive and heart-stirring as this was to those who had lived through the lean years of make-do and expediency, the razing of the old school block raised concerns amongst a number of Old Brentonians who were afraid that the Brentwood they had known was now gone. It was a concern initially shared by the Headmaster. Earlier in the fall of 1987, he had suddenly felt that a school that was now to be filled with technology, including a language lab with video capability and computer monitoring, a computer lab of advanced design, a library with microfiches and the capacity for computerized cataloguing, six science labs that made the old ones look positively antediluvian, and a lecture theatre and recording studio straight out of Hollywood, would mesmerize everyone, and that the interpersonal relations that had been at the heart of the Brentwood philosophy since the school's foundation might be affected. Would high-tech dehumanization adversely affect that special spirit of excitement generated by enthusiastic teachers who love their subjects, whether they be history or biology or sculpture or rowing? Computers cannot be the role models that are so necessary for high-spirited, but sometimes self-centred teenagers, who need to be inspired to become curious, avid learners.

Undoubtedly, these concerns were legitimate. Certainly, many of the school's pioneers (teachers as well as past students) were right in expressing concern about the possible loss of that unique and potent *esprit de corps* that had bound them together in a common purpose during the early days of almost endless perseverance and uphill struggle. To overcome the many challenges posed by little money, inadequate facilities, and an as yet well-established reputation, required not only extraordinary effort, but a lot of shared faith as well. Would these special relationships born of unusual and extraordinary circumstances survive the creative brilliance of this new academic building with its well-equipped classrooms, state-of-the-art learning centres and custom-designed lecture theatre? The answer of course was going to be "yes," as long as everyone concerned was careful not to be so seduced by the wonderful gadgets that they might replace the special human relationships on which the school had been built. Ultimately, time would show that these fears were groundless, but Bill Ross's awareness of the danger was instrumental in ensuring that it did not happen.

On November 12th, 1988 the new Academic Centre (most appropriately named after Bill Ross upon his retirement in 2000) was officially opened by Mrs. Gordon T. Southam, mother of Old Brentonian Gordon Southam, in whose memory the lovely library facing over the sea in the southeast corner of the building was named. Present at the ceremony were many Old Brentonians, in addition to the current students, the architect, the Chairman of the Board of Governors (John McLernon), the Chairman of the Building Committee (Jolyon Briggs) and, of course, Bill Ross, for whom this occasion represented the climax of his twelve-year tenure as Headmaster. Now, his vision and foresight were spectacularly and irrevocably stamped on the Brentwood campus. The last vestiges of the rough-and-ready school of the early sixties had almost disappeared. Even the residences, many of which still carried the trappings of bare necessity and paucity left over from that previous era of austerity, were soon either to be replaced (in particular the spectacular new Rogers House as recently as 1999), or redesigned and refur-



William T. Ross Academic Centre, its completion in 1988 ended phase three of the building program.



The Alex House extension, part of the refurbishing program that took place in the student residences.

bished (beginning with Whittall House after the disastrous fire in 1978) to bring them up to the standards of comfort and purpose that were central to the concept originally developed by the Headmaster when he was appointed in 1976. Above all, Alex House, the only original building left on campus after the demise of the old main block, was not only extensively upgraded inside, but also was extended on the north and south sides to create extra student rooms and more comfortable staff quarters. The old Rogers House was also extensively renovated and reopened in 2000 as a girls' residence called Gwynneth House.

Amongst several buildings which, thanks to the new construction, were now gone were those whose beginnings could be traced back to the creation of the original solarium for crippled children, and which had been especially close to the hearts of the school's early inhabitants. Perhaps most obviously there was the old "smoke hole" (left over from the days when smoking was permitted for seniors with parental permission) that was located on the waterfront, adjacent to the outdoor tidal pool. For years it had been an unofficial social centre for the older students. Now it disappeared under the tons of rock needed to provide a firm foundation for the new main building. There is no doubt that its burial greatly enhanced the beauty of the waterfront in more ways than

one, but that did not stop many Old Brentonians expressing their sorrow at its burial! Three other distinctive if decrepit landmarks, all connected at some time or other with the early development of the school's art program also disappeared at this time. The old gymnasium and laboratories at the north end of the renovated old classroom block, situated across the plaza from the new Academic Centre and appropriately renamed the Annex, were now converted into a fine arts complex, bringing dance, sculpture, drawing and painting, photography and pottery together in one designated area for the first time. The old "Art Centre," as it was somewhat euphemistically called, had been based (after a brief sojourn in the old maintenance shack opposite Whittall House) in the old main building just inside the front door (drawing and painting) and the "pottery shack" situated to the right of the school gates, where once bachelor teachers had lived. Daphne Jackson, Jack Kempster and Helen Smith deserve special recognition for their many years of dedicated teaching during which so much fine work came out of such inadequate facilities. Once again, with so many other areas of endeavour in the Brentwood of yesteryear, it was a case of students being inspired by brilliant and enthusiastic teachers who made light of the difficult, even deficient, circumstances and surroundings.

In the spring 1988 edition of the *Brentonian* magazine, Ivor Ford paid tribute to twenty-seven years of Brentwood history that came crashing down when the bulldozer and the wrecking ball obliterated the old Solarium Building. His words, quoted in full here, evoke beautifully the atmosphere of that bygone era.

Do you remember when Sidney Tipper crawled through the catacombs, broke into the kitchen (recently the Librarian's office) through a hole in the floor, and cooked hundreds of pancakes which he delivered to the whole school as breakfast in bed?

Do you remember when the boys of 10 C finished their exams early and were set to paint

their classroom a particularly hideous shade of green that survived, an aesthetic disaster, until the final destruction? Through the whole messy operation the floor was protected from paint-spots by layers and layers of newspaper. Only after the job was finished and all the papers removed was Magnuson, the ultimate klutz, allowed near — admiring the completed work of his classmates, he kicked over the half-full paint pot!

Do you remember when the Grade 12 girls of Hilton (class of '78) kidnapped Nick Prowse? The Staff immediately agreed to pay the ransom — on one condition: N. R. B. P. not be returned. As intermediary, I took the message back to his captors and was prevailed upon to keep him company in his misery. Surrounded by beautiful girls who served us cake and sherry and played jazz records from Mrs. Dub's (Hilton houseparent Mimi Wichlinski) collection, we were, sadly, obliged to miss all Saturday morning classes!

Do you remember how, as Duty Masters in the days when all the school did prep. in the main block, we always set out in the first five minutes to catch someone talking and slipper him loudly in the Sunroom “pour encourager les autres”? You could catch such old campaigners as Terry Kirby and Dale Berry only by braving the elements and risking your neck on the far-from-safe sundeck to wait, unobserved in the dark and ready to pounce.

Do you remember when Frank Martin announced he was tired of hearing D. D. M. brag about the view from his study window? One morning D. D. M. threw open his curtains, as was his wont, to show some prospective parents the million-dollar scene and was met by a wall of opaque white — Frank had sprayed the glass with artificial Christmas snow!

Do you remember when we used to have jam-sessions around that battered, old piano in the Ellis locker-rooms (later the boathouse)? Chris, the eldest Butterfield, sang his way through, from cover to cover, my Rodgers and Hart Songbook. Harrison took his first tentative steps at drumming. Later, as a professional musician, he would entertain American troops in Saigon at the height of the war and meet Sidney Tupper enjoying a holiday — a cycling tour of Vietnam!

Do you remember when the students stole the skeleton from the Bi. Lab. and left him seated in a chair in the middle of the staffroom? A teacher who shall remain nameless came in the next morning and, quite unfazed by the gruesome sight, observed to his colleagues, “You know, Nick’s looking a little better this morning!”

Do you remember when we had, on the last night of the school year, a battle in the staffroom and Simmo (teacher Pat Simmons) and I bravely repelled all assailants with salvos from the tennis machine? Do you remember when we took conversion kicks with tin-cans using a colleague’s head as a tee? Do you remember . . . ? Do you remember . . . ?



The old Academic building, which was torn down to make room for the new and improved William T. Ross Academic Centre in 1987, contained many memories.



Brentwood pioneers (left to right): Jim Burrows, Ivor Ford, Tony Carr, Bill Ross, T. Gil Bunch and Nick Prowse in front of the William T. Ross Academic Centre, 1988.

But now we enter the realm of recollections that are best forgotten (though around midnight of Old Brentonians' Day my memory might, miraculously, be restored), and I must finish. I wonder, will the new buildings have similar tales to tell twenty-seven years from now?

As if these old Solarium building memories were not outlandish enough, Ivor went on to reminisce about Brentwood's original "ivy-covered professors in ivy-covered halls" (as quoted from Harvard professor and contemporary comedian Tom Lehrer), the ones who survived the razing of the old Solarium and its replacement by the new Academic Block. He even had the audacity to suggest that these six "ivy-covered professors," unlike the old building itself, were irreplaceable as mythical personalities in Brentwood folklore, if nothing else! (It seems, perhaps, that time has proved him right!) To future generations of Brentonians unfamiliar with the pioneering sixties, Ivor's portraits should conjure up some of the images that gave those far-off days such a special flavour — an intense but carefree atmosphere almost impossible to reproduce in today's more firmly established and well-regulated school. As Bill Ross once commented to Nick Prowse, "If we (the six pioneers) applied for a position in today's school we would probably not be hired."

As befits a true Latin scholar, Ivor quoted Horace — *Ehen fugaces labuntur anni* — in lamenting the "fleeting years slipping by" as he saluted these six veterans, each by then with over twenty years of service, in his own inimitable fashion.

Gil Bunch, now known as T. G. B., but formerly "Crunch" or the "Silver Fox," was an "original" when the School re-opened in 1961 at the Mill Bay site. He lived at the sea end of what became the Health Centre. Then, as now, a martinet, he was much-feared yet much-beloved by the students. Many of the staff felt, to paraphrase the Duke of Wellington, "I didn't know what effect T. G. B. has upon the students, but, by God, he terrifies me."

I recall many affectionate, yet brilliantly perceptive impersonations of Gil. One of the most memorable, by Peter McFarland, included the injunction to the students: "This dining-room is far too noisy. You will continue the meal without chewing!"

And who can forget Gil's tennis coaching? Dozens of students — never allowed near a ball until several weeks into the season — were to be seen, like so many Messieurs Hulot, miming with a racket, each stage of the serve, broken down and brilliantly choreographed. I have observed our most recent professional coach using the same technique and his teams, like T. G. B.'s are winners — plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

William T. Ross — now "Uncle Bill," then "Baby Duck Huey" — arrived in 1962, and I (for some inexplicable reasons known as "Mad Henry") in 1963. Bill lived in what became the Ceramics Hut, recently burned to the ground by the Mill Bay Fire Department. I lived in an apartment that has disappeared under Gibson's Super-Value Store (now Thrifty's).

Bill and I were the Grade 11 form masters. As such we were responsible for decorating the Old Gym for the Grad Dance.

The greatest problem was creating the illusion that the roof was low and had not been designed by an architect attempting to reproduce the loftiness of Notre-Dame cathedral.

The first year we had thousands of paper diplomas and academic caps dangling from the ceiling. The next year we attempted a nautical theme — navigational beacons; anchors; buoys; fishnets holding up thousands of papier-mâché fish, octopuses and other denizens of the deep; a sailor with a bosun's whistle piping aboard each guest up a gang-plank.

Our attempts to achieve authenticity must have been successful — several people were sea-sick!

The next year we moved to the Crystal Gardens in Victoria. Someone cruelly suggested Bill and I decorate the hall like the School gymnasium! Perhaps the management had heard of our nautical motif. Half an hour into the evening, condensation from the roof saturated us. It was like being beneath the sea. Hairdos and gowns became limp; white dress-shirts stained by black tuxedos. It was claimed something went amiss with the air-conditioning. We were convinced it was a dastardly plot by our rivals from S.L.S.

The puny attempts of 1990 to control smokers pale in comparison with those of the 1960s. Bill and I took opposite ends of the woods that graced the spot where Ellis, Privett, and the New Sports Complex now stand. With synchronized watches, we lobbed in thunder-flashes from the Sea Cadet Stores. None of that nonsense about chasing miscreants through the underbrush.

We picked off at leisure those boys who came racing out, convinced World War Three had begun.

Tony Carr (Bone) and Jim Burrows (Jimbo) arrived in 1964. Tony lived briefly at the local autocourt and then moved, as Housemaster of Senior House, into the south end of a building that has disappeared under Rogers House.

It is hard to believe that these venerable pedagogues looked then like teenagers.

Tony had two baby boys, one of whom (Brian) has now joined his father on the Staff. One memorable night, the Carrs returned from an evening out to find Mike Hicks, their student baby-sitter, sound asleep in their living-room while their infant sons were wide awake, busily trashing everything in sight.

Jimbo lived in what is now a mathematics classroom at the north end of the Old School Block, then Privett House.

If you look closely, you can see that each classroom was originally two dormitories. One of his prefects, Dicky Day, looked to be in his early twenties, considerably older than baby-faced Jim. Amazing that Jim became the grizzled character we love, a cross between Papa Hemingway and Santa Claus, while Dicky, like Dorian Gray, still looks twenty-one. On one famous occasion, Jim, while touring with the Cowichan Rugby Club, was denied admittance to a night club because he had no I.D. to prove he was of legal age.

Nick Prowse arrived in 1966 to become Housemaster of Ellis House, then located in the top of the old Solarium building.

As a swinging bachelor, he had a Dodge van in which he transported a succession of most attractive young ladies.

Not surprisingly, he was soon nicknamed "The Collector." (If you don't get the allusion, read Fowles' novel.)



Mr. Ivor Ford, 1963–1994,
Brentwood's consummate
Renaissance man.



Mr. Ross gets down to the business of replacing old buildings with new ones.

For those of you who consider him volatile, let me assure you that Nick has mellowed! Ellis boys from those times remain his close friends, though he ran his house making Attila the Hun appear as benevolent as Peter Pan.

Two students, Washburn and Hobbes, had a permanently untidy dorm. Nick gave them a Number One Inspection, then padlocked the door. It was unlocked just before they went to bed, then re-padlocked in the morning. Paul Lacterman was made to dismantle completely his metal bunk-bed, then put it together again. As you must realize, we've all, especially Nick, become very soft.

My favourite Nick story concerns a student, John Compston, who used to swing, Tarzan-like, on a rope from his dorm window and smoke in the Vee formed by the roof and the chimney of the old Solarium Building. One night, N. R. B. P., spotting from the beach a red glow in the dark in this unlikely location, sprinted up to Ellis House to catch an amazed student as he came swinging back through the window on the end of his rope.

Nick's politics have changed also. At a party he was referred to by the hostess as "that immature, young socialist," and we had suspicions he might be actively involved in a communist cell in Mill Bay. Some witty boys bought him a life subscription to the Socred Party.

So there you have the six of us — battle-scarred veterans wheeled out on certain occasions to be gawked at, relics of a by-gone era. It must be hard to believe that once we too were young and energetic (for example, duty days from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. every three days) and, above all, fun-loving.

We few, we happy few.

In the middle of this campus improvement and reformation, Assistant Headmaster Gil Bunch celebrated his twenty-fifth year at Brentwood. He was the only person still on staff who had been at the school since the day it opened so he was in a unique position to fully assess the growth and development that had taken place during his long and distinguished career. In an interview for the summer/fall 1986 edition of the *Brentonian* magazine, he said in his own singular way:

Brentwood's development has seemingly achieved its own natural rhythms; there are highs and lows, but there is overall a very elemental sense of growth on the campus these days. Out of this there comes for me what is new, and that is my ability to recognize now in Brentwood a sense of permanence. It is here; it will be here. I haven't always had this sense, but it is true that for many years Brentwood seemed at times quite ephemeral and insubstantial, whereas now I am more than ever aware of its substantiality and its sense of being an identity as part of the landscape both realistically and metaphorically.

As usual Gil had felt the pulse of the school better than anyone. He was able to look beyond the very obvious physical changes that were taking place and sense the air of solidity and permanence that came with the school's emerging maturity. This truly was "the end of the beginning" with all its peculiar excitement and uncertainty, when the character, personality and

direction of the school had been decided by the Herculean efforts of the young teachers and their youthful charges, inspired by the leadership of the builder David Mackenzie and the visionary Bill Ross. What had been achieved was symbolized by the vitality and newness of the blossoming and increasingly contemporary campus.

None of this, of course, was immediately apparent to those whose daily lives represented the heartbeat of the school. Yet in subtle ways it could be felt in a new air of quiet confidence that had almost imperceptibly replaced the sense of inferiority of the “new kid on the block,” the still young school’s need to prove itself. The loud, raucous brashness of the early days, which Gil Bunch had worked hard to soften without removing the vitality and exuberance of the young, rapidly developing but still rather immature Brentwood, finally disappeared with the advent of the modern, innovative buildings that, by 1988, dominated the campus. With the completion of this first co-ordinated Brentwood Development Plan, the years of make-do were over. The school had arrived and its future appeared assured. There was really nothing left to prove, and the Ross-Bunch team had reached the apex of their unique and farsighted partnership.

These profound and dramatic alterations to the physical makeup of the campus were accompanied by some less obvious but, none the less, far-reaching changes in Brentwood’s broad general principles and programs. For the most part these innovations and modifications were either the result of better facilities, creating opportunity for more variety and/or participation in school activities, or the ageing of the school’s pioneer teachers, necessitating a change in leadership. This latter process was to be a big feature of the nineties as many older teachers reached retirement (the first such group in the school’s history included Ivor Ford, Victor Lironi, Nick Prowse, Norah Arthurs, John Queen, Steve Wynne and Robert Cooper), but the transition began during the time of the campus transformation.

The most dramatic change came at the top. At a May 1986 meeting of the Board of Governors, Bill Ross recommended and the Board accepted his suggestion to alter Brentwood’s administrative structure. For the first time, a second Assistant Headmaster’s post was created. This modification reflected the increasing complexity of the Brentwood syllabus based upon the expanding tripartite program (which was, in itself, a by-product of the building development). This new appointment went to veteran teacher John Garvey, who was currently an administrative assistant to the Headmaster, head of the mathematics department, and 1st XI soccer coach. In his new role, John would take particular responsibility for the direction of Brentwood’s increasingly diverse, multi-choice, athletic program, and also the co-ordination of campus affairs, the supervision of the school’s daily routine and the management of the general office (academic timetable, and so forth). This newly created position would now allow Gil Bunch to concentrate more fully on the implementation of Brentwood’s rapidly expanding fine arts program, as well as retain a teaching load and his responsibility for senior drama. For the first time since the school’s refounding in 1961, the huge presence of Gil Bunch around campus would be diminished and the long-term impact of this change would be felt through the nineties.

Another significant change extended Nick Prowse’s responsibilities. Previously, Nick’s major area of concern had been serving as the school’s academic advisor to senior students (grades eleven and twelve). Now his academic advisory and counselling activities would encompass the entire school. This extension of Nick’s academic function was in response to a need to monitor



Mr. John Garvey, Assistant Headmaster, 1990–present. Brentwood’s “Mister Soccer,” he has been the 1st XI coach for over thirty years.



Two of Brentwood's many award winners in the eighties.

Top: Colin Bannon receives the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award from the Prince himself, 1987.

Above: Signe Gotfredsen congratulated by Principal Johnston of McGill University at a reception honouring scholarship recipients, 1987.

more closely academic progress at the junior level, and to assess, on an ongoing basis, the suitability of the entire academic program. In addition, at the senior level, a career-counselling dimension was added to Nick's university planning work.

This increased emphasis on Brentwood's role as a university preparatory institution came about in part because of the B.C. government's decision to reinstitute provincial exams at the grade twelve level. For the past decade, senior secondary school students in British Columbia had been able to achieve graduation standing, and thereby seek university entrance, without the experience of writing public, province-wide, government qualifying examinations. With each individual secondary school (public and private) evaluating its own students' performance, any attempt at a standardization process which would facilitate the delicate admissibility decisions at the university level were obviously not possible. In June 1984 the reinstatement of province-wide graduation examinations once again provided external testing based on a set curriculum, marked by external examiners, with results that constituted forty percent of a student's final standing. Furthermore, for those students who wished to add a competitive dimension to their academic efforts, the B.C. Ministry of Education would continue to offer scholarship examinations (which had been the only form of external academic evaluation available to a school or a student since 1972).

The British Columbia government's decision was, of course, particularly pleasing to a school that had always prided itself on the rigour of its academic syllabus. Now, once again, Brentwood had the opportunity to measure the scholastic abilities of its graduating students against those of their peers from across the province. The school's desire for an external yardstick to gauge the strength of its classroom teaching and the calibre of its students would henceforth include the whole of the senior class as opposed to only the scholarship candidates. This was, therefore, a good moment for Brentwood to look at the full breadth of the academic part of the tripartite program to make sure that absolutely everything was being done to ensure that academic grades, and therefore university entrance successes, were consistently strong. The first set of public examination results published in August 1984 were suitably gratifying. In almost all subject areas, Brentwood's results were amongst the best in the province, usually exceeding not only the provincial averages but, in many cases, the school's submitted evaluations as well.

This high level of performance was to be maintained consistently. The arrival of the Fraser Institute's academic league table in the mid-nineties provided conclusive published evidence of Brentwood's superior standing in B.C. (see Chapter Ten).

Meanwhile, Brentwood continued to fare extremely well in British Columbia's Scholarship Awards Program, maintaining its domination of the local school district's awards. Indeed, in 1984, Brentwood won eleven of the seventeen awards given and this level of achievement (almost 70% of the scholarships available to the five local senior secondary schools) was to be upheld for the remainder of the decade. Side by side with these impressive results was also the high number of Brentwood graduates who continued to gain early entry to their first choice of post-secondary institutions across an ever broader spectrum of North American universities, ranging from the Ivy Leagues in the United States to Canada's Ontario, Quebec and Maritime universities as well as the usual "local" western ones, such as Alberta, UBC and UVIC.

This increased academic role for Nick Prowse led, in 1987, to a major change in the coaching structure of rugby at the school. After seventeen years (fourteen of them in tandem with Ivor Ford), Nick stepped down as the 1st XV coach. His successor

was David Robertson, who arrived from Scotland to teach languages and take over the housemastership of Privett House, as well as run the school's rugby program. Nick himself now moved to the Junior Colts XV, which he coached for the next five years until his academic administrative responsibilities became too demanding for him to continue. In 1969, Nick had joined Ivor Ford to help coach the 1st XV until a new director of rugby and head of games could be found to replace Alan Rees. A temporary position had turned into a career commitment and a long, unique and highly successful partnership which had maintained the school's reputation as a major force in B.C. high school rugby. Although he and Ivor had very different temperaments — the one strong and silent, the other fiery and volatile — they both believed passionately that success was based on forward domination, good handling skills, strong defence, hard work and "heart." This long and fruitful association with Brentwood rugby had seen many changes to a program that had once dominated Brentwood's sports scene, especially in the early years. The most significant of these had been the ending of two terms of rugby and the introduction in the mid-seventies of a more varied multi-choice sports program. In spite of this de-emphasizing of rugby, Nick's and Ivor's 1st XV's had continued to maintain Brentwood's reputation as provincial leaders in the sport. Similarly, under David Robertson's expert guidance (he had been the coach of Edinburgh Academy's 1st XV and the Scottish Schoolboys XV prior to his arrival at the school), Brentwood's 1st XV (and the whole program) continued to thrive in spite of the erosion of the Independent Schools' League which traditionally had not only provided the best school rugby in B.C., but also had been a breeding ground for future British Columbia representative players and Canadian internationals. In the waning years of the Independent Schools' League (its demise began with St. Michaels University School's decision to switch to spring rugby and the local high school league in order to regain access to the B.C. High School Tournament), David Robertson's XV's (he was ably assisted by John Allpress, who previously had worked with Nick Prowse after Ivor Ford retired from coaching the 1st XV in 1983) had a couple of great years in the competition (specifically 1989 and 1990). However, David's departure to be Assistant Headmaster at Shawnigan Lake School and the school's reluctant decision to switch to spring rugby in 1993–94 in order to attempt to remain at the highest level of competition in B.C. high school rugby, in fact, further eroded rugby's status as the school's premier sport. Now Brentwood's traditional game had to compete for the first time with the other Brentwood athletic giant, rowing, as well as a popular and ever-expanding tennis program, for a still limited pool of athletes. This was to be the major problem confronting Brentwood's new athletic director and 1st XV rugby coach, Tony Medina, when he joined the staff in 1995.

In reality, rugby's loss of dominance at Brentwood was as much caused by the changing times as the collapse of the independent schools' competition. Even as the physical shape of the campus changed dramatically during this period, so did the philosophy of the school, which was now firmly committed to a multi-choice tripartite program in which the students, rather than the school, made the decision as to which of the many choices to select. The two sports to benefit the most from these changes in the curriculum were boys' soccer and basketball.

The collapse of senior rugby in the fall term (the juniors continued to play against their independent school counterparts), opened the door for boys' soccer to emerge as a major Brentwood sport. Long condemned by rugby to be a minor, second-term sport with limited, top-class competition, soccer now blossomed and, as will be seen in the next chapter, Brentwood quickly became a force to be reckoned with at the "AA" district, regional and provincial levels. Basketball, meanwhile, was also pros-



Gregor Dixon, Class of 1990, captained Canada's seven-a-side rugby team at the 1996 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games and the 2000 Manchester Commonwealth Games.



Boys' varsity basketball team, 1992. By the nineties, basketball was starting to get the same high-profile enjoyed by rugby and rowing.

pering, thanks in the main to a brand-new, top-class facility, the new sportsplex, which not only enabled Brentwood to host tournaments, but also provided plenty of room for enthusiastic supporters. Both of these benefits gave a huge impetus to the boys' and girls' teams and helped attract younger students to the respective programs, an essential and vital key to any future success. In addition, it must be noted that Brentwood's new state-of-the-art home court made it easier for the admissions office to attract talented juniors. By the end of the eighties, the girls, coached by the school's business manager, Clyde Ogilvie, had reached the provincial finals in the "A" competition whilst the boys (still coached by Steve Cowie) had reached the district and occasionally the regional finals in the "AA" competition. The sport, however, still lacked the exposure and high profile within the school program to reach the next level and consistently beat the "giants" of the local league.

Even though the developments mentioned above were perhaps the most dramatic innovations attributable — either directly or indirectly — to Brentwood's recently

erected state-of-the-art facilities and the changes in philosophy that were arising from the new campus, they were not the only novel departures that emerged as Brentwood looked towards its long-term future. Most obviously related to the increased opportunities associated with the new buildings were the additions made to the music and rowing programs. The new boat-house under the plaza now more than doubled the amount of space for rowing shells and, with the completion of the rowing tank immediately behind it, provided both the opportunity and the equipment necessary to expand the size of the rowing club itself by offering greater opportunity for aspiring rowers to learn the skills necessary for success. The result was not only continued high accomplishment nationally at the élite level but the beginnings of national success in the novice and younger age divisions as well. In addition, the now internationally famous Brentwood Regatta was able to accommodate still more requests from schools and clubs to attend, indeed so much so, that the event (held at the end of April each year and brilliantly masterminded by John Queen) was fast becoming one of the biggest high school competitions in North America (by this time over twelve hundred competitors). Meanwhile, with a third of the rowing club now attending the National Schools Championship in St. Catharine's and competing successfully in almost all categories, Brentwood brought home its first overall points trophy at the national level in 1989, with such a wide winning margin that the award was made before the last race!

Although not as highly visible as the triumphs of the rowers, the building of the technologically advanced lecture theatre created a new space in which Ivor Ford could re-establish his reputation for intimate review (*The Seven Ages of Women* in 1991) and jazz could (not so quietly) emerge as a legitimate extension to the conventional music program. The genius behind *Jazatak* was the talented musician and director of admissions, Lance Bean. Under his inspired baton, the school's first jazz ensemble moulded its own distinctive sound and then went on a highly successful tour of Washington, Oregon and California. This ground-breaking trip not only raised the profile of Brentwood in this very important recruiting area, but also established for the first time a touring tradition for Brentwood performing arts, which had for a long time lagged behind the school's major sports in visiting other areas of the world. Since the first tour to the U.K. in 1965, the efforts of boys' rugby to visit such places as New

Zealand, Australia, Fiji, France and Spain, and girls' field hockey to travel to continental Europe and Bermuda, had provided an unprecedented opportunity for Brentwood students to meet students from other countries and sample different cultures. (In 1991 the school was to welcome two exchange students from St. Petersburg, Russia — another first). Meanwhile, the mammoth effort of the rowing coaches to take almost the entire club on an extensive tour of North America in the summer of 1981 (33,464 road miles in school buses in thirty days) revealed the restless energy and spirit of adventure present amongst both teachers and students.

This broadening of horizons for Brentwood students, which became increasingly common in the eighties as international travel became easier and less expensive, was accompanied by increased opportunities to serve the local community at home — something that had always been close to Bill Ross's heart. Not only were the students, through the expanding activities of the Student Activities Committee and the Grad Council, taking greater responsibility for their own entertainment and amusement on campus, they were starting to reach out to the community beyond the school gates. The aim was to show Brentwood not as an élite, gated community, but rather as a caring and responsible institution interested in being part of and serving the local neighbourhood.

As a residential school, it was important that the students see Brentwood not as a cage controlling and limiting their actions, but rather as a home away from home. Bill Ross had always felt that a happy, thriving campus had as its core a strong sense of community. Although, obviously, this began in the students' residences with each house socializing together and organizing its own special events, it was important that this communal feeling spread to the campus as a whole. Hence the invaluable work of such organizations as the S.A.C. and the Grad Council, each becoming well known for such events as theme days and dances, auctions and karaoke concerts. The amount of time and energy devoted to these efforts to improve the quality of student life on campus was prodigious. There were, of course, many problems, but these paled in comparison with the achievements of the school's young volunteers, and showed that the administration did trust students to organize and show initiative from a relatively early age.

The Student Activities Council (as it was now called), in particular, from its very inception in the early seventies, had insisted that its mission of volunteerism extend beyond the campus. Under the guidance and direction of a succession of young teacher co-ordinators, including Robert Cameron, Gerry Pennells, and, most recently, Clayton Johnston, the S.A.C. continued to expand its original mandate. Most significant of all was its growing willingness to organize the student body as a whole to raise money for charity through special events and community service. Each year has become increasingly productive in this regard. Early efforts to raise money for a Korean orphan through biscuit and cheese lunches, and the annual contribution to the local food bank for its Christmas hamper appeal, soon expanded into such projects as the 30-Hour Famine to raise money through World Vision for support of community projects in the Third World and, above all, the recently started Charity Work Day to raise funds for such organizations as the Canadian Cancer Society, the BC Lions Society for Children with Disabilities (Easter Seal) Camp Shawnigan and the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Victoria and Vancouver Island. On the first Saturday of



The jazz band, 1993 — the first Brentwood performing arts group to go on tour — shown here with its conductor, Mr. Lance Bean.



Brentwood students volunteer with the Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary Unit, 1987.

the third term, Brentwood students are “hired out” to people in the local area to spring clean, garden, paint, chop wood, and such, and, in return, their “employers” paid for the work through a donation to the newly established Brentwood College Charity Trust Fund, which then distributed all money raised to the charities specifically named each year.

In addition to these initiatives of the S.A.C., individual Brentwood students also serve the community of Mill Bay through their involvement with the Salmonid Enhancement Project on Millstream Creek and their service with the local Coast Guard Auxiliary. In November 1987, the school, in association with the Mill Bay community, became Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary Unit 34 and, through the generosity of a Brentwood parent and a locally organized raffle, acquired a “6.3-metre, rigid-hulled, inflatable, fast-response, rescue craft” capable of speeds in excess of thirty-two nautical miles per hour. Thus the Mill Bay/Brentwood College Rescue Society became one of thirty-eight units located along the B.C. coast whose volunteer members, numbering twelve hundred, respond to forty percent of all

West Coast marine search-and-rescue incidents. This Rescue Society came into being through student interest which had grown out of Brentwood’s Aquatic Diploma Program, a course which sought to take advantage of Coast Guard-related training in boat handling, rescue techniques, radio operation, and first aid. Over the years, the success of this unique and vital service has been possible because of the continuing dedication and interest of such teachers as Frank Purdon and Victor Lironi and student leaders of the calibre of Kevin Smith, Michael Shepherd, Liz Conway and Liz Anton.



When Bill Ross had sent out to parents and former students his message about the projected building program in the fall of 1981, he had envisaged “a plan for the future” that would “result in a more fully integrated campus, serving to enhance the sense of community and involvement essential to the Brentwood experience.” By 1989 he could look back with considerable pride on a decade of unprecedented achievement, in which this goal had been accomplished and, in the process, Brentwood’s unique educational philosophy successfully promoted and enhanced beyond what even the most optimistic of the school’s early builders had envisaged. Now, as the school entered its fourth decade, it was going to have to face for the first time the greying of those who had fashioned this success story. As the world approached the uncertainties of the new millennium, Brentwood’s creators would face the task of passing on the torch to the next generation of young teachers and impressing upon them their traditions and values before stepping back so that the school could continue to evolve and grow to meet all the challenges the future would bring.

Mr. Victor Lironi, 1969–1999, played a major role in the development of Brentwood’s water-based activities.

Chapter Ten: The Changing of the Guard, 1990–2001

“De Manu In Manum” (From Hand to Hand)

Brentwood College School Motto

The Brentwood College School that entered the last decade of the twentieth century was obviously an extremely successful educational institution. The road to ascendancy in this challenging and competitive arena had been, by most standards, a comparatively short but nevertheless dramatic one. The reasons for the school’s phenomenal growth and development were manifestly clear and evident — two truly remarkable Headmasters, each of whom had a formula that fitted the requirements of the time, a governing board with wisdom and foresight, who provided strong management but still allowed the two heads the freedom to run with their ideas and plans, an imaginative yet practical development plan, a dedicated and committed teaching staff and, of course, an energetic and enthusiastic student body. The manifestations of this singular and dynamic rise to prominence in Canadian education could be seen daily in the classrooms, on the sports fields, on the stage and in the galleries of the Mill Bay campus. Now at the height of the school’s success, change was in the air. Gradually during the nineties, those who had built the school into the multifaceted and forward-looking educational institution it had become passed on, in Rudyard Kipling’s words, “an undefiled heritage” to the next generation of Brentonians. For the students and the teachers, staff changes heralded a fresh approach to fundamental beliefs and principles. By the turn of the twenty-first century, many of the veterans were retiring and different faces with contemporary ideas emerged in the corridors of Brentwood. This exciting period was a time of transition, in which the best of the old met up with the restless energy and regenerative ideas of the new, and Brentwood embarked on yet another stage in its evolution.

The process had really begun back in 1985 when John Garvey was appointed assistant headmaster, not as a replacement for Gil Bunch, but rather as an associate to share the responsibilities of running the school on a daily basis. Bill Ross made it clear that Gil was still very much the man in charge, and John’s role was to assist with the ever-increasing background tasks that had emerged as the school became a larger, more complex educational institution. For the next few years, Gil was to remain the “focus figure” around the campus and with parents, after which he would gradually reduce his involvement until his complete retirement in 1993. As John Garvey said himself, “There was never, is not now, and never will be anyone like Gil.” Fortunately, from the beginning, John was wise enough to realize that he could never imitate Gil. He could not pretend to be Gil, and he could not replace him. In John’s own words, “Heck, I didn’t even have a white suit and pink sunglasses!”

Because both were astute enough to appreciate the value of their special relationship, the transition from Gil to John as the school’s senior internal administrator went exceptionally smoothly, even though their personalities were very different. Indeed, during those early transition years, Gil was John’s greatest supporter. Gil was never to be guilty of overstaying his time (for instance, when Gil was not running an assembly, he avoided them so that John could establish his own influence), and he knew how to bow out gracefully and with as little fuss as possible. Indeed, Gil stated on several occasions that he did not believe “in long farewells.” The result was that the school said goodbye to “its greatest, single presence,” with little or no



The torch is passed to a new generation of dedicated young teachers.

Top: English teacher and soccer coach, Paul Collis.

Above: Science teacher and women’s rowing coach, Susanne Walker.



Mr. John Garvey with the 1993 soccer team. In this year, soccer replaced rugby as the major first-term sport for senior boys.

fanfare, but his ideals lived on to influence future generations of Brentonians for whom he was just a name out of the past. This was Gil's last great service to the school he loved and to which he had given his life. John Garvey himself spoke for all Brentonians when he said,

(Gil) cared passionately about the school, about the standards, and about the humanity of all on campus. Few would counter the suggestion that Gil was perhaps the major factor in Brentwood establishing itself as a leading example of a kind, caring and compassionate community. While he was keen to slip back into the wings and to divest himself of many previous responsibilities, he retained his fire and drive whenever principles were involved. I believe that he imparted to all of us who knew him the same zeal for hard work and for kind-heartedness.

Freed by the "great one" himself from the long shadow he cast over all at Brentwood, John Garvey was able to bring his own special qualities to the role he had inherited. He shared Gil's immense capacity for hard work and, though he lacked Gil's flair for the outlandish which had made him such a remarkable and notable figure around campus, John soon showed that he was a brilliant administrator with a keen sense of humour and easy sense of fun to counter his serious, reserved side. He quickly developed a warm working relationship with both teachers and students based upon mutual respect and understanding.

Perhaps John Garvey's most significant achievement to date has been his leadership in bringing the "computer age" to Brentwood. It all began back in 1977 when, with the help of governor, parent, and long-time Brentwood supporter, Colin Rutherford, John persuaded the school to buy three computers from the Radio Shack representative in Seattle. The first computer room was downstairs (in what is now the Academic Annex) next to the old physics lab. Later, it was moved to the top floor of the "Hilton" in the old school administration building. In 1981, again with the philanthropic support of Colin Rutherford, the school switched to Apple computers which replaced the typewriters in the "typing room," and were in use until the old school block was demolished in 1986. A new computer lab was established in the Ross Academic Centre in 1987 with Tony Crossley taking over the reins as head of department. His initiative led to the creation of the first computer network for staff and students. Today, the school is fully computerized and Brentwood remains at the cutting edge of this new technology, thanks in large part to the pioneering efforts of John Garvey beginning over twenty years ago.

In spite of his increasing responsibilities all through the nineties, John was also instrumental in the emergence of soccer as a major sport at Brentwood. Soccer as a sports option at the school made its debut in 1970 with Howard Martin as the first coach. Initially, it was confined to the snowy wasteland of January, during the brief hiatus between the two rugby seasons, but when rugby was reduced to one term in 1977, the game began its long emergence from obscurity. Soon, both girls and boys were participating in independent schools competitions and, together with basketball and ice hockey, soccer became an important part of Brentwood's new, multi-choice, second-term program. Under John's expert coaching, the game developed a loyal following and a series of strong teams, particularly in the boys' division, began to dominate the other independent schools, in both league and cup play. Between 1975 and 1986 the game slowly developed some legitimacy in the eyes of most at

Brentwood. While it never surmounted rugby, it did emerge from the role of a casual sport, thanks in part to a number of fine players who also had strong rugby credentials, such as Derek Sharpe, Tim Waring, Jamie Delmotte, Rory Carr, Jon Pike and Bart Melhuish.

In the early nineties, the parameters for high school soccer were changed. Previously, the B.C. soccer championships were held in May of each year. In a radical departure from tradition, the B.C. high school rugby championships were moved from November to May, and the B.C. high school soccer championships from May to November. As has already been noted, this switch prompted some of the independent schools to move their senior rugby to the spring rather than the fall. Brentwood, with ever-more limited competition in the first term, reluctantly followed suit, also moving its senior rugby program to the third term. This created an opening for soccer to replace rugby as the main field sport for senior boys in the first term. In the fall of 1993, as Brentwood began its first season under this new arrangement, the B.C. High School Championships were split into two tiers — “AAA” and “AA” — enabling the school to be really competitive in the medium-sized (“AA”) high school category. Brentwood’s initial participation in the highly contested local schools’ soccer league happily coincided with the arrival of two of the finest players ever to put on Brentwood soccer colours, Jai Ralls (an American who subsequently won an athletic scholarship to Portland State University) and Norm Abramovich. In that first year of competition in the local high school league, Brentwood went on to win the “AA” Vancouver Island Regional Championship and subsequently finished sixth in British Columbia.

After this first, exciting year when Brentwood clearly made a name for itself amongst the powerhouses of “AA” competitions in B.C., boys’ soccer established a higher profile in the school than ever before. Continued success in the North Island “AA” play-offs, plus a further trip to the provincial championships, has resulted in soccer being recognized as one of Brentwood’s major sports. The game’s journey from its obscure, recreational beginnings is symptomatic of the Brentwood philosophy of “strength through diversity” that became such a hallmark of the school in the nineties.

By 1990, it was obvious that John Garvey’s manifold responsibilities (together with everything else, he continued to be a major presence in the classroom as the school’s outstanding teacher of mathematics) were overwhelming, even to him. To relieve John of some of the load he was carrying, as well as directly assisting the Headmaster, Andrea Pennells was promoted from her teaching role to become Brentwood’s first female member of the senior administration. After some interesting and diverting discussions on the exact nature of her title (assistant headmistress, vice principal, dean of women?) Andrea was given the suitably androgynous, conservatively correct title of “administrative assistant” (this was formally changed to “assistant head” in 1992, much to everyone’s relief!).

Andrea had spearheaded many of the changes in the school’s approach to co-education that had come steadily throughout the eighties. In a more balanced approach, the school now gave more time in assemblies to girls’ sports, more women were appointed to the faculty, the males on the staff became more attuned to female perspectives, the school admitted junior girls and the salad bar became a permanent fixture in the cafeteria. During these years of change, Andrea established herself in the forefront of this “revolution” as firstly a house parent, then a department head and finally as director of fine arts.



Mrs. Andrea M. Pennells, with her appointment as Assistant Head in 1990, became the first female member of the senior administration.



With over thirty years of service to the school, Mrs. Norah Arthurs was the doyen of Brentwood's female teachers.

As a house parent of fifty girls in Mackenzie House, Andrea was described as “a shoulder, an ear, a smile and most of all a heart.” After a productive five years in residence, during which time she learned that “nothing equals the bonds which strengthen with the years of shared confidences and experiences of both good and bad, funny and sad, fulfilling and frustrating,” Andrea took up the challenge of heading the English department.

Leaving behind the nurturing support of her house staff (Jane Jackson, Norah Arthurs and Dot Pitt), she now faced one of Brentwood's still formidable all-male preserves. Chairing her first meeting as department head in September 1987, she remembers feeling “like a green girl, unsifted in such perilous circumstance.” As the only woman in a department full of veteran male stalwarts (including Gil Bunch, Ivor Ford and Nick Prowse), she had been given the daunting task by Bill Ross of providing new direction and impetus to the teaching of writing, critical reading and literature. Quickly earning the respect and support of the men with her first-class academic credentials, mature judgement and obvious willingness to seek consensus, Andrea succeeded brilliantly in building a high profile for the study of English throughout the school and a strong *esprit de corps* within the department.

Over the next five years, the English department, under her guidance and direction, developed a new sequential curriculum and introduced new texts for the teaching of writing and literature from grades eight to twelve. All teachers in grades eight to ten were expected to set and mark weekly writing assignments, with longer papers set every ten days for the senior grades, culminating in the production of full research papers, in preparation for first-year university work. Competitions and school publications in the Yearbook, of which Andrea was the editor, encouraged students' creative writing in poetry and prose. Cross-grade examinations were introduced to evaluate all students more fairly, with individual teachers setting and marking different sections in the new common exams according to agreed keys. Exam essays were double marked to ensure consistency, and the final marks for all students in each grade were assessed by the department as a whole to ensure that no student would be penalized because of placement in a particular set. Although the individual teaching styles of Bunch, Prowse, Ford and Pennells remained passionately idiosyncratic and individually highly effective, with a core curriculum, common exams and school-wide expectations, the teaching of writing and literature for all Brentwood students flourished as never before.

To cement these changes for the future, Andrea and her department produced a handbook for all Brentwood English teachers, recording the philosophy, policies, curricula and practices of the department. Frequent meetings in preparation of the handbook proved lively, with passionate debates on the teaching of formal grammar, metaphysical poetry, or the twentieth-century novel. To celebrate the department's new collegiality, Andrea also started an English department soirée — a gourmet potluck feast for the literati! Thus, the English department became a model for the continuing academic evolution of the school, taking its place alongside the mathematics department, which had already seen similar developments under John Garvey. As Brentwood became an increasingly complex academic organization, all department heads began to play a pivotal role in developing curriculum, mentoring new faculty, and promoting the professional development of their teachers. This significant organizational growth in all the academic disciplines completed the move away from the more informal collegial approach of the early days when David Mackenzie had, through his lack of meaningful middle management executive positions and titles,

sought to empower his young teachers to play a direct and active part in the administrative process. These present changes were the inevitable result of the expansion of the school in enrollment, gender, and programs over the previous fifteen years.

With the arrival (in 1992) of the experienced English and drama teacher, Edna Widenmaier, Andrea was able to hand over her department head responsibilities and focus all her attention on her obligations as assistant head and director of fine arts. At first, these critical roles were only vaguely defined in terms of scope and direction, but Andrea very soon stamped her own character, ideas and solutions on the administrative problems which came her way. In no time at all, she remembers, “an eclectic catalogue of responsibilities landed willy-nilly on my desk.” Amongst them were a number of new

programs including the implementation of advanced placement examinations, the development of student leadership and service through the prefect system and, above all, the organization of special events. All these additions to the school’s agenda were to grow in stature and importance under her able leadership. With particular reference to the increasing number of special events, Andrea built on the legacy established by her mentor, Gil Bunch, and then enlarged it substantially. Many Brentwood traditions which continue to characterize the major events of the school calendar (such as Orientation, Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Christmas, Careers Day, the Brentwood Regatta, the Fine Arts Performance Season, Awards Days and the Closing Ceremonies) were originally fashioned by Gil and then enlarged and amplified by Andrea. To the Brentwood Regatta, for example, Andrea added an Art Show, musical entertainment on the plaza, and an awards podium, with Olympians and VIPs invited to present medals and trophies to the winning crews, whilst to Parent Teacher Evenings, she introduced more structure and organization, including such innovations as advance scheduling of appointments, thanks to the technological expertise of Richard Curry (who has since developed excellent systems for marks collections and term reports as well). Meanwhile, such attention to detail — gracious student hosts, engaging displays, attractive invitations, well-designed programs and fresh flowers — continued and expanded on Gil Bunch’s philosophy of success being in the particulars, and further enhanced the Brentwood way of doing things with distinctive class and style.

Again building on Gil’s foundation, Andrea was also providing new impetus and direction to the ever-more complex fine arts department. By the mid-nineties, fine arts in all its many aspects was flourishing as never before, thanks in part to her hiring of several highly creative instructors and the dynamic leadership she provided them.

In the visual arts, a bevy of talented artists, under the inspired direction of gifted teachers like veteran Helen Smith and new arrivals Geri Leigh and Joseph Hoh, were soon blossoming. The work of exceptional students, including Min-Jung Cho, Ben Wu, Roger Chen, Carmen Tsui, Jason Remai, Oscar Zachrisson and Rosanna Watson were adorning the Gallery, the Academic Centre and the dining room with their impressive creative output, imaginatively and professionally displayed by the new Gallery curator, Geri Leigh. In the performing arts, two recent arrivals in the English department were proving to be



The Brentwood Young Company provided much-needed exposure to drama for the junior school.

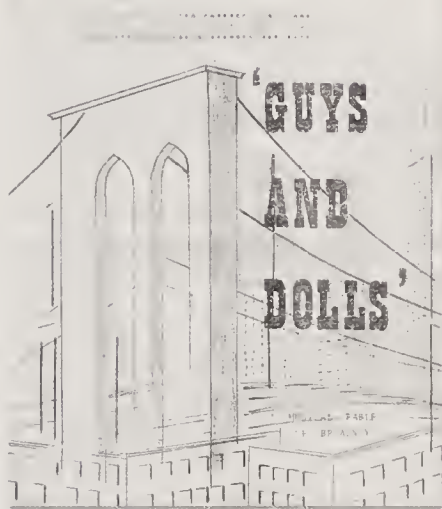


Photo and original program from the school production of *Guys and Dolls*, 1981. One of the first of Brentwood's mega-musical productions, it helped to establish the school's musical theatre tradition.

worthy successors to the legendary T. Gil Bunch. Keith Digby, a veteran of many years in Canadian repertory theatre, most recently as a director, stage manager and producer, immediately involved his senior drama classes in staging powerful productions in experimental theatre, whilst Edna Widenmaier, another teacher with considerable theatrical experience, soon provided much-needed exposure to drama for the junior school through her Brentwood Young Company.

In any given year, these two energetic and experienced drama specialists would be producing and directing straight plays (normally Keith Digby with the senior drama class, and Edna Widenmaier with the juniors), as well as either a lavish musical or a musical review (thanks once again to the creative talents of the ever-young Ivor Ford, still writing and composing for the school after thirty years of success in this genre). Both of these involved large numbers of the school body and were open to all students through the audition process. Perhaps most impressive of all in a school that had always encouraged student participation was how these two dedicated professionals managed to juggle time constraints and student availability without compromising in any way the quality of their presentations. In one memorable spring (1995) the two male leads in Edna's *Oklahoma* (Ryan Steingard — Curly and James Weldon — Judd) were also members of Tony Carr's Heavy Eight which won a Canadian national championship less than two months after the curtain came down for the last time. (For Brentwood old-timers, James Weldon's performance as Judd also brought back fond memories of another fine athlete, 1st XV rugby captain Jamie Norris, in this role in Gil Bunch's 1980 production.) Fortunately, the female romantic leads, often exceptional athletes also, like Carla Smith (*Oklahoma*), Rebecca Whitney (*South Pacific*) and Kristal Larsen (*Merry Widow*) were primarily field hockey players, thus avoiding similar in-season clashes over priorities.

Another strong addition to the fine arts program at this time was Treena Stubel, whose dance troupe, with the highly talented Hilary Maxwell as the lead performer, was electrifying audiences in both the chorus line of the musicals and at the evenings of dance. Meanwhile the school's musicians — jazz singers and instrumentalists, concert band and concert choir — continued to bring music to life on the Brentwood campus, particularly at the Spring Concert, which became noted for fine ensemble performances and outstanding soloists like Sharon Toole, Tam and Megan Boyar, and Jason Oh. Then, of course, once a year all this talent would come together, most recently under the direction of Edna Widenmaier, in the annual feast to the eyes and ears, the Brentwood musical production, including *My Fair Lady* (directed by Keith Digby), *The Battle of the Sexes* (Ivor Ford Revue), *Oklahoma*, *South Pacific*, and *The Merry Widow*.

For many years, legendary Brentwood drama teacher and director, Gil Bunch, had shied away from “the musical” believing it was not “truly challenging since the director was too often little more than a co-ordinator.” His antipathy to Gilbert and Sullivan was also well known and, even in the last days of his final illness, the mere mention of *South Pacific* (the school's current production at the time) produced a glint in his eye and hissed comments of derision. Perhaps not surprisingly, his conversion grew out of his respect and admiration for colleagues Joyce MacLean (dance) and Robert Cooper (instrumental and vocal music) and his desire to work with them. The outstanding success of *Oklahoma* (1980) and *Guys and Dolls* (1981) paved the way for what was to become a Brentwood tradition. Both Keith and Edna deserve special mention for the way that they have expanded and extended this remarkable precedent so that today it is part of the school's folklore.

Ultimately though, it was Andrea Pennells who was responsible for orchestrating this outstanding and busy array of inventive and highly productive talent. Thus it was that she spent an increasing amount of time in a co-ordinating, mediating and counselling role. With students and teachers as fully committed as Brentwood's were to a highly demanding and intricate tripartite program that constantly drew upon all their physical and mental resources, it was important to have a supportive shoulder or an understanding ear always available, as well as, of necessity, a knowledgeable guiding hand. A steady flow of problems and concerns found their way to her desk and to her training as a psychologist. Before long, Andrea was involved not only in nurturing, but also advising and correcting. In addition, she increasingly took on the vital role of co-ordinator of Brentwood's popular and fast-expanding "special events," such as the highly successful evenings of music and dance. In this way her role as Brentwood's first female administrator became defined, and she proved to be the perfect foil for her cohort John Garvey, who continued to concern himself primarily with the daily administration of a residential school. Indeed, because of these increasing everyday demands, John now handed over his other specific responsibilities as Director of Athletics and Director of Residences to Tony Medina (in 1996) and Graham Linn (in 1999), respectively. (The latter role was subsequently taken over by Clayton Johnston when Graham was appointed Assistant Head at Shawnigan in 2000.)

To the newly arrived Tony Medina fell the unenviable and exacting task of restoring the status of rugby in the school after several years of uncertainty following the collapse of the independent schools' league and the reluctant move to spring rugby for seniors. At the same time, he had to co-ordinate an ever-more complex, multi-choice sports program. Fortunately for the school, he brought with him to Brentwood the administrative skills of a successful businessman, combined with a level III rugby coaching certificate and a first-class reputation as an outstanding senior men's coach. He enjoyed almost immediate success when the 1998 1st XV reached the final of the "AAA" Provincial Championships, beating two of the tournament favourites (Oak Bay and Carson Graham) on the way. Unfortunately, their opponents in the final were old rivals, Shawnigan Lake School, who had an exceptionally strong team. In a close-fought battle played at UBC's Thunderbird Stadium before hundreds of fans, including many Brentonians, the Brentwood boys played their hearts out, but Shawnigan emerged victorious by a score of 22-15. The loss brought bittersweet memories for those who remembered the glory days of yesteryear, but the courageous play of the 1st XV throughout the tournament earned them renewed respect from the top echelons of high school rugby in B.C. and ensured that the sport remained high profile at Brentwood in the tradition of the school's great teams of the past.

This success cemented Tony Medina's reputation as an exceptional rugby coach, but his patience and his administrative skills were to be tested to the limit as he tried to balance the rival demands of Brentwood's plethora of student athletic options, as well as the often conflicting claims posed by an expanding tripartite program. It is a great credit to Tony, as well as to the young coaches concerned, that they were able to walk the minefield of opposing opportunities and produce several outstanding results in sundry disciplines.

Many of the school's new young coaches, hired in this period either to relieve veteran teachers or provide the expertise necessary to cultivate newly developed or recently introduced sporting alternatives, quickly made their presence felt. For Clayton Johnston it began in January 1993, with a phone call from Bill Ross to where he was teaching in the Bahamas, asking,



Mr. Tony Medina, Director of Athletics, 1996-present. To Tony fell the task of restoring the status of rugby and directing a complex, multi-choice sports program.



Robin Urquart (1999), Brentwood's most outstanding basketball player, he averaged 30 points a game.

"Clayton, what is your philosophy on basketball?" He obviously satisfied the Headmaster, who made it clear that he wanted the school basketball program to be more competitive at the regional and provincial levels, because Clayton was duly hired (although there was no real teaching position on the staff for him). When he arrived at Brentwood he was both appalled and excited — appalled at the lack of emphasis on the sport and excited at the challenge this posed. The school certainly contained fine athletes and strong veteran coaches such as Steve Cowie and Ian Henry (boys) and Clyde Ogilvie (girls), who had been struggling to build a high-profile program for years. Even though Clyde Ogilvie's varsity girls, in particular, had reached several provincial "A" tournaments, the school was still not willing to promote basketball actively as a major Brentwood sport, and yet this was the only way to ensure consistent success in the tough and challenging world of Vancouver Island regional high school competition.

Now trading on the *raison d'être* for his hiring, Clayton Johnston pushed Bill Ross hard to live up to the promises he had made. During the two years that he spent observing the basketball program in action, Clayton persuaded the Headmaster to provide a face-lift for the gym (new score clock, provincial championship banners around the walls — albeit mostly rugby), more announcements at assemblies to inspire the students and promote the game, tours at Christmas, an evening pre-season league, a catchy name and logo, and, above all, school-sponsored coaching clinics. These objectives themselves, however, did not immediately take the school to the next level as Clayton found out when he took over the senior boys' program from Steve Cowie. The same problem that had dogged Steve for a decade was still present, namely that an extremely competitive local league still had little respect for Brentwood's basketball program. Only by getting into the top local tournaments could the school gain the "hands-on" experience to improve. Yet how was the school to earn the right to these increased opportunities when invitations were hard to come by and the much-needed but elusive high-profile status was still missing? Clayton and his fellow coaches persisted. Gradually, their efforts produced results, and by the end of the decade, Brentwood had finally earned the right to be included in the "in-crowd." Today, at last, Brentwood has been represented by players of true star quality, like Robin Urquart and, as well, is a real basketball presence on Vancouver Island. A fine example of what the hard work of veteran coaches, plus the timely injection of new blood, can do to rejuvenate a long-standing but-too-often unsung Brentwood sport.

Another school athletic endeavour that was benefiting in this era from a potent combination of veterans and neophyte coaches was Brentwood's perennial powerhouse sport, rowing. Successes of senior boys' (heavyweight and lightweight) coaches Tony Carr and John Queen at the provincial and national level since 1973 were legendary, but half of this phenomenal duo (John Queen) retired in 1997, leaving a huge gap to be filled. In addition, the achievements of the senior girls and the juniors and novices of both sexes had been during this same period somewhat sporadic and inconsistent. Whilst the senior girls, after coach Susan Garvey's initial success, had enjoyed a few moments in the sun at the national level with Kevin Cook and later Pat Kelly in the eighties, the junior and novice programs had continued to linger in the shadows. Now, with the arrival of a fresh, young corps of coaches led by Susanne Walker, Debbie Sage, Brian Carr, Richard Curry and Jim Ganley, the club began to add overall consistency and depth to its well-established, but somewhat narrow, success story.

It was not surprising, therefore, that the nineties saw not only continued phenomenal success at the élite level, but also amongst the lower, junior and novice, ranks of the club. The decade first produced Brentwood's only U.S. Scholastic Champion (1992 boys' varsity eight), then three consecutive Canadian secondary school titles (1994–1996) for Tony Carr's élite crew (four and eight), followed by Brentwood's first-ever victory in the prestigious Princess Elizabeth Cup at the Royal Henley Regatta in England (1996). This victory in the only major schools' event to have eluded Tony Carr, and which, for too long, had brought back the bitter memory of a loss by inches to Kent School, Connecticut in 1972, had only increased his determination to win Britain's unofficial schoolboy championship. The year became even more memorable with a gold medal at the World Junior Championships in the pairs event for two of this crew (David Calder and Kevin White), also coached by Tony Carr. By the end of the decade, these continuing successes by boys' crews at the élite level were being matched by all sections of the rowing club. Building on the all-round successes of 1998, when all the Brentwood crews at the national championships qualified for the finals, resulting in seven medals and five fourth-place finishes, with, for the first time, every female competitor coming home with a medal, the 1999 club (with one hundred and eighty total members) was the largest ever. After dominating at local regattas, this group of dedicated athletes, inspired by their coaches, went on to St. Catharine's where the girls, "created history," as "never before had Brentwood women attained such successes both in senior racing and as a team as a whole at the Nationals." The boys, not to be outdone and aided by gold medal performances from the Senior Heavy Eight and the Flyweight Eight, won the Canadian Scholastic Boys' overall trophy. This was a hard act to follow and, though the first year of the new millennium saw the club win its own regatta in convincing fashion, the nationals were a mixture of great successes combined with heartbreaking injuries and disappointments. The only highlight was the victory of Brentwood's lightweight crew in the senior 70 kg race; for new coach Brian Carr it was a particularly sweet victory, for it ended an eighteen-year drought in this most competitive of all St. Catharine's events. The real icing on the cake for Brentwood's largest club was, however, becoming the Canadian Secondary Schools Regatta overall (boys and girls) champions in 2001, for this revealed how strong the club as a whole had become — a great tribute not only to the young athletes (male, female, élite, novice and junior), but also to all the dedicated coaches, veterans and beginners who had, in the best traditions of Brentwood College, inspired their crews "to be the best they could be."

Although these achievements in Brentwood's most prestigious sport tended to overshadow the efforts of the rest, it is obvious that rugby, soccer and basketball also had successfully risen to new and particular challenges in this era, and, in the process, helped preserve and maintain Brentwood's legacy based on the pursuit of excellence. Almost forgotten amidst the clamour of these new challenges and significant changes was the continuing success of Brentwood's two oldest female team sports — field hockey and volleyball. In the former, wily veteran coach Howard Martin quietly took his team to the "AAA" provincials almost every year (no mean achievement for a small school), whilst new coach, Shrawan Khanna, rebuilt the recently sagging volleyball program so quickly that by the end of the decade his girls had won the Independent Schools Championship (1998), the Western Canada Independent Schools Championship (1999) (after twenty-eight consecutive attempts), as well as achieved a second-place finish in the Vancouver Island Regional Championships (1999) and two consecutive top-ten finishes (1998 and 1999) in the "A" provincials.



With over 1500 high school athletes participating, the Brentwood Regatta is now one of the largest high school events in North America.



Mr. Howard Martin, 1969–2002. The 1st XI Field Hockey coach for thirty years, Howard built the girls' program into one of the strongest in B.C.



Aoibhinn Grimes, Brentwood's greatest field hockey player, she scored 139 goals in three years for the 1st XI.

Although Brentwood has always emphasized the team over the individual athlete, it would be remiss not to mention several outstanding athletes in individual sports who emerged in this period, some of whom were to go on to perform at the international level. First of all, it would be appropriate to give a special salute to Franco Biondo (another Brentwood coaching newcomer, but veteran parent), the school's tennis coach (aided as usual by long-serving teacher, Rob MacLean) and their young male and female athletes, who brought the school its first provincial tennis championship in seventy-three years (1999). This success quickly became a "threepeat" at the "AA" level. Although it must be admitted that the school can hardly have claimed to have produced players of this calibre it is, nevertheless, a tribute to the quality of the Brentwood program that it should continue to attract top-class young tennis talent.

Squash also, thanks to the superb, new courts that were part of the Woodward Sportsplex opened in 1985, and the ubiquitous Rob MacLean, began to attract good athletes from both in the school and outside, including a memorable second-year (1987) when a group of young players led by Stephen Hall made it all the way to the National Junior Championships. Within ten years the Independent Schools Senior Championship had been won five straight times, several players had won places on the Vancouver Island team, which (in 1996) won a silver medal at the B.C. Winter Games, and the school had produced its first two "A" players in Lawrence Ledesma and Peter Brown. In spite of these achievements, squash gained little recognition in a school still dominated by older, more traditional sports. Even so, in 1997, two players, Stefan Buski and Peter Brown made it to the Nationals with the latter gaining the quarter-finals at the Under-19 level. Amongst the school's sports purists, squash, as it moved further into the limelight, became increasingly the centre of much discussion over the issue of team sports versus individual sports. In a school that had always stressed team play, the steady increase in individual sports continues to raise concerns amongst the school's traditionalists. Surely though, there is room in today's school for both, as long as students are encouraged to sample each.

On the world scene, David Calder, Tom Herschmiller and Morgan Crooks rowed in the Canadian Heavy Eight at the Sydney Olympics (Kevin White was a spare), Gregor Dixon and Sean Fauth played rugby for Canada, and the Grimes sisters (Aoibhinn and Anna) played field hockey for Canada. It is also worth noting that Aoibhinn, undoubtedly Brentwood's greatest field hockey player, scored 139 goals in three years for the 1st XI (1991–1993), including thirteen goals in the 1993 "AAA" provincial tournament in which Brentwood finished third, after a disputed disallowed goal by Aoibhinn denied them a richly deserved place in the final. This truly amazing achievement will probably stand for many years to come. Incidentally, Howard Martin would be the first to admit that the continuously high standard of girls' field hockey attained in this period was in large measure due to a strong developmental program run by Jane Jackson, Laura Ferreira, Fiona Linn and Sue Whitney.

Obviously, the athletic program that Tony Medina directs today is in very good shape and is not only maintaining the high standards established over the years in the school's traditional sports, but is also carving out new reputations for excellence as well, particularly in squash (thanks to the superior coaching skills of recently appointed Gustavo Verna). Unfortunately, all the publicity generated by achievements in fine arts and sports tended to overshadow what was happening in academics, even though the principal mandate of the school — to prepare students for success in post-secondary education and beyond — remained a core objective of all the educators on campus. The fact that these young people continued to excel on the sports

field, on the water, on the stage, and in the studio, may add greatly to the school's attractiveness as an educational institution, but without continued academic success, the potential clientele would soon look elsewhere for the education of their children. No one understood this better than Bill Ross who, though surrounded by the trappings of success, constantly reminded his faculty that what happened in the classroom continued to be paramount.

That the Headmaster was ultimately proven correct can be seen in the many positive comments made by Old Brentonians about their classroom experiences, years after their successes in Brentwood's more high-profile sports and fine arts productions have faded into the past. It is amazing how many words of appreciation begin with the statement, "I have had countless teachers throughout my life, but none had a greater impact than . . ." Two Brentwood teachers (Gil Bunch and Nick Prowse) were once described on CBC television as "dream weavers," and several prominent North American universities, including recently M.I.T., have written to individual Brentwood teachers to thank them for the positive influence they have had on a student's academic career. Gerry Pennells' National Teaching Award in 1998 was based upon commendations from former biology students attending universities around the world. Everywhere that Brentonians gather, praise can be heard for what went on in the classroom and reference is made to "teaching excellence" and "high standards set and obtained." Three graduates of the nineties expressed the views of many Brentonians about their teachers when they said "It is because of Mr. Prowse that I still spell History with a capital 'H'" (Erica Osburn), "Mr. Garvey made mathematics fun" (Sawa Yamamoto) and, "Mr. Pennells' charismatic teaching style challenged us to think about the 'why's' of Biology" (Geoff Mullins). All Brentwood teachers imbued in their students a similar love of subject, and this essentially is what teaching is all about and ultimately still is the prime reason for Brentwood's existence.

During the late eighties, the provincial Ministry of Education began to rewrite a number of grade twelve courses, in some cases reducing the level of challenge considerably. This prompted Brentwood to begin offering Advanced Placement courses through the auspices of the Educational Testing Services and the College Board of Princeton, New Jersey (through whom the school also continued to operate the Scholastic Aptitude Tests or SAT I and II, essential for successful entry to American universities). These A.P. courses, which offer successful candidates the opportunity to gain first-year university credits, are widely used in U.S. schools and recognized by virtually all colleges and universities in North America. Their courses also expose students to more challenging material, and the majority of the school's seniors enrolled in a broad range of these academic subjects during the nineties. Today it is not uncommon for up to seventy students to write as many as one hundred and fifty A.P. papers and most enjoy a high degree of success. Indeed, the number of Brentwood A.P. scholars has risen steadily during the last decade.

Although the majority of students still write provincial exams in June, the integration of A.P. courses into the Brentwood timetable has altered when many write these exams, resulting in the best in biology writing in January and those in chemistry and English literature writing in April. This ability to spread out the times of writing has improved student performances in most subjects, as well as in the Provincial Scholarship Program. Brentwood students now regularly win between thirty and



What happens in the classroom continues to be paramount at Brentwood.



Geoffrey and Annie Mullins,
recipients of perfect scores
on their provincial exams.

forty such scholarships each year (approximately thirty percent of the graduating class). Meanwhile, the introduction of academic ranking of B.C. schools by the Fraser Institute commencing in the mid-nineties has thrown the spotlight back on a school's across-the-board results in provincial exams. Although most educators recognize the rather narrow frames of reference of this assessment, Brentwood was quick to acknowledge that its academic performance must be competitive with its rivals in the marketplace. Unlike some schools, however, this challenge, though it produced much staff discussion, did not result in Brentwood restricting entry into certain courses in order to retain a high academic average. Admittedly though, this determination to continue to allow the students free choice here, as in other areas of school endeavour, did, on a couple of occasions, adversely affect the school's overall ranking by the Fraser Institute. Fortunately, after a few disappointing results, the decade ended with the school achieving its highest-ever ranking, fifth overall in British Columbia, and top amongst co-ed schools, public or private. This strong standing was followed in 2001 by another fine performance — sixth in B.C. and first on Vancouver Island.

A survey of provincial examination results for this last decade of the century, and the fourth since the school's refounding, reinforces how high academic standards had indeed become. Even though Brentonians continued to embrace the school's philosophy of total participation, rather than the more narrowly defined pursuit of academic excellence only, perfect scores in the regular and scholarship segments of the provincial exams became increasingly common. In either one or both of the regular physics and mathematics exams in particular, perfect scores were recorded by Andrew Houser (1991), Chi-Yin Lee (1992), Hansol Lee (1993), Debbie and Danny Sit (1995), Geoffrey Mullins (1997), Stephen Livingstone (1999), Neil Morriss (1999), Annie Mullins (2000) and Jonathan Rhodes (2000) (plus chemistry as well). Not to be outdone, the humanities also had some perfect results in this period, mostly in languages. The scholarship results were equally spectacular with several perfect eight-hundreds being recorded, whilst Drew Belobaba (1992), and Abi Johnston (1993) climbed above the 2000 plateau for three scholarship subjects for the first time since the new scoring system was introduced. Finally, in a fitting climax, a brilliant 2327 out of 2400 was achieved by Geoffrey Mullins in 1997 (including two eight-hundreds).

Thus, the millennium ended on a high academic note, a huge tribute to all those Brentonians who worked so hard to ensure the well-being of a highly complex and demanding syllabus.

However, in a world where the academic expectations of both parents and students is steadily on the rise, it may become necessary in the future to re-examine the school's allotment of time for academics and how this single educational strand fits into Brentwood's overall program. In an era of student-centred learning, ambitious students who are highly self-motivated often complete courses from more advanced grades, particularly in languages and mathematics. More and more, the Brentwood timetable must be designed to accommodate these cross-grade programs. So long as Brentwood continues to attract students with academic ability, coupled with a strong desire to test their personal limits, it must attempt to design a timetable to accommodate these demands. How in turn this will affect the current tripartite program remains to be seen, and poses an interesting challenge for the new Head and her staff.

Another, often unheralded, aspect of the Brentwood academic program that grew in stature during this period was the service the school provided for special needs students. Unlike many of its rivals in the marketplace, Brentwood had a long and successful history in this important and necessary educational area, dating all the way back to the late seventies. Even though Brentwood had always been primarily a university preparatory school, it was one of the very first such institutions to recognize that students with significant learning-style differences were no more or less intelligent than those who made up the main academic stream. Today, terms like SLD and AD/HD are much more common in educational circles than they were thirty years ago, and yet even today, not many schools have a qualified learning specialist on staff and available to the student body. Brentwood prides itself in the fact that such a specialist has been a significant presence on the staff since Bill Ross brought in Mrs. T. Pitcher to help a specific grade eight student in 1976. Thanks to her help, that boy, much to the delight of all concerned at Brentwood, went on to a successful, post-secondary career at the University of Washington. By the beginning of the nineties, Brenda Laurie, a highly qualified learning specialist and educational consultant, was monitoring and guiding twelve percent of Brentwood's population (a figure that, significantly, is similar to the general population). With an American-trained language therapist of Brenda's high standing on staff, it was not surprising that during the eighties, Brentwood came to the attention of the famous Kildonan School for dyslexic children in New York City. Before long, a number of graduates from this program were moving on to face the challenges of Brentwood's demanding academic program under the watchful help and expert guidance of Brenda and the mainstream teachers who worked with her and cared for those pupils who needed the special attention in order to be successful. The school's and Brenda's reputation spread quickly by word of mouth as parents looked for a school that was willing to mainstream bright, dyslexic students. Today's program is a very important part of the Brentwood experience for a number of young men and women who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to realize their potential. Indeed, by the late eighties, Brenda's program had extended to include a study skills program which benefited all students at Brentwood.

It is a great tribute to Bill Ross as an educator that he was willing to open up the advantages of Brentwood to this often misunderstood segment of the student population when, in many ways, it would have been easier simply to ignore their existence, particularly in the early days of the program. Many of today's successful Brentonians have reason to be grateful to him, Brenda Laurie and the school.

Indeed, because of Bill's care and concern always for the individual student, he also at this time addressed the issue of offshore students (particularly from Asia) who attend Brentwood and for whom English was a difficult second language. For these students and for their parents, entry into a prestigious North American university was paramount. Yet, without a strong score in TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), this aim was often difficult to achieve. Since 1976, Bill Ross's philosophy had always been that Brentwood took full responsibility for each and every student whom it accepted, and this included the ten percent of the student population who now came from offshore. Beginning in the late eighties, Mrs. Beth Melhuish helped the school's E.S.L. (English as a Second Language) students improve their skills and prepare for the TOEFL exam in a specially created Communications 11 class. By 1996, Peter Smith, a specialist in the field, was conducting tailor-made extra classes for Asian students from across all grades, so that they could more successfully integrate into the larger school



Mrs. Brenda Laurie, 1983–2002. Many years of remarkable work with Brentwood's special needs students.



Mr. Gerry Pennells, an outstanding biology teacher, receiving the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence, 1998.

community, as well as achieve their post-secondary objectives. And so it was that, even as Brentwood's reputation for excellence in academics, sports, and the fine arts continued to grow in the nineties, the school quietly and thoughtfully catered to all its young people, thereby preserving its carefully guarded egalitarian philosophy so close to the heart of the Headmaster.

In the meantime, a heavy responsibility continued to rest on the school's Academic Counselling Services to make sure that the very busy senior students got the advice and guidance they needed to make intelligent decisions about their future. The broad and thorough service, built up by Nick Prowse as Director of Academic Counselling over a span of twenty-one years (1977–1998), was a highly successful one and became a model for other independent schools. Proof of this can be seen by reviewing the post-secondary plans for Brentwood graduates during the early nineties. As the decade progressed, these approximate figures fluctuated only slightly, with the exception of successful Ivy League entry which showed a steady growth:

98% moved on to post-secondary education
 87% to four-year university programs
 75% accepted for early admission to university of choice

BREAKDOWN OF GEOGRAPHICAL / REGIONAL CHOICES

Inside B.C.	38%
Eastern Canada	35%
U.S.A. (including Ivy League universities)	16%
Alberta	7%
Other	4%

When Nick handed over his responsibilities to Gerry Pennells in 1998, his efforts were recognized by the Board of Governors on Awards Day, in June, with the presentation to him of the rarely awarded and prestigious Hugh Stephen Award for "outstanding service to the school." A year later, Gerry Pennells himself was honoured with a Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. The tradition of dedication and service as well as the "pursuit of excellence" continued to be the hallmark of Brentwood's faculty.

Against the backdrop of consummate and continual accomplishment, the reality was that the marketplace was becoming more and more competitive. In spite of the school's obvious success, the competition for top-quality students was becoming readily more apparent. Traditionally, the school had relied on word of mouth, followed by a friendly introduction to an exciting and unique tripartite program on a beautiful campus, to attract prospective candidates. Now more was needed in order to keep the school full. For years, David Mackenzie, and later Bill Ross, with the help of Gil Bunch and a few senior teachers, had looked after admissions, but the times now demanded something more sophisticated and professional. The result was the appointment of Lance Bean as the school's first Director of Admissions. Through the timely use of attractive brochures, colourful videos, parent meetings organized in key geographic areas, and stimulating "Admissions Days" in which current Brentwood students

played a prominent part as hosts and guides, as well as the growing availability of scholarships and bursary opportunities, Lance created more and more occasions to further promote the school and attract well-qualified, prospective candidates.

In the nineties, the highly successful partnership which Lance forged with Bill Ross enabled the school to attract an ever-wider spectrum of keen and enthusiastic young people all eager to make a unique contribution to Brentwood. To Bill Ross's unparalleled personal touch, Lance now added a pattern of thoroughness based upon letters that recorded all relevant details at the time of acceptance, an analysis of each student's learning style, full, thorough and up-front tours of the school's facilities (still often carried out by student ambassadors), and perhaps most important of all, a careful watchfulness over each and every student during his/her first year with plenty of opportunity for active, one-on-one, personal counselling. After Lance moved on to handle Publicity and Archives as part of a new and rapidly expanding Development Program, veteran teacher John Allpress took over the Admissions Office. To this new position John brought his own special brand of hard work and total commitment. Originally hired in 1980 (fresh off the ski slopes of New Zealand via B.C.'s Silver Star Ski Resort), John took over Pat Simmons's key roles as assistant housemaster in Rogers, junior rugby coach and mathematics teacher when Pat resigned to move to the United States. To these responsibilities he soon added rowing coach and skiing co-ordinator, as well as housemaster of Rogers House when Tony Carr retired. John's propitious arrival (he was in fact engaged in a North American "walkabout" after graduating from university in Christchurch, N.Z. when he wrote to a number of B.C. independent schools on the off-chance of a teaching position being open) was indeed a lucky day for Brentwood. His exceptional academic and athletic capabilities combined with an interest in music and theatre, as well as his boundless energy and infectious enthusiasm, immediately resulted in his presence being felt in almost all areas of school endeavour. Over the next twenty years he enjoyed success in everything he tackled, including two very effective stints as 1st XV coach, firstly in tandem with Nick Prowse after Ivor Ford retired, and then with Nick's successor, David Robertson. Now he not only accepted Lance's mantle, but also began working with Bill Ross in fundraising. Not surprisingly, when Bill retired, incoming Head, Andrea Pennells, appointed John her new Deputy Head (External — liaison with parents and alumni and the Brentwood Foundation). In this capacity he now joined forces with Deputy Head, John Garvey (Internal — daily administration, campus issues and concerns) to make up Andrea's senior management team. John Allpress and his successor in Admissions — Andy Rodford (appointed in August 2000, when John accepted his new position) — had continued to expand and develop Lance's concept, spending more and more hours on extensive personal interviews and engaging Brentwood displays both at the school and on the road.

Hand-in-hand with this new emphasis on "promotion" has been the creation of a Development Office, designed to advance the requirements of the school and develop a long-term plan to handle fundraising needs. Most importantly, newly appointed Director of Development, Lara McDonald, has aimed to provide greater exposure for the school to parents, alumni and the general public through the recently established web site (created by Tony Crossley), the long-established, family-style newsletters, alumni gatherings sponsored by regional chapter committees, class reunions and specific promotional exercises, such as the Annual Golf Tournament organized by the O.B.A. executive, as well as encouragement and support for networking amongst the extended Brentwood family, through the school's on-line alumni directory. In these ways, Brentwood is working aggressively to prepare itself for the challenges of the twenty-first century.



Mr. John Allpress, 1980–present, appointed Assistant Headmaster by Andrea Pennells in 2000. It was a fortunate day for Brentwood when skiing brought John to B.C. from his native New Zealand in 1980.



Mr. William T. Ross, 2000. Farewell, and thanks for a job well done!

Ultimately, though, as it always has been, one of the major keys to a successful school continued to rest primarily on the shoulders of the house staff. In a residential school, a “happy house, meant a happy school.” The huge demands placed on the students would not have been possible unless these young people were contented and secure in their environment. So much of the school’s myriad successes came down to boys and girls with the energy and the enthusiasm to pursue their goals free from anxiety, unhappiness and homesickness. Brentwood as a school was now long removed from the rigid compulsion of the early days but then, as now, a positive frame of mind came down to good residential relationships. A caring house parent provided not only guidance and counselling but also was consoling, soothing and comforting. Pastoral care was every bit as important as mentoring and disciplining, and it took very special people to spend the long hours required to provide all three. In this regard Brentwood has been very lucky. Over the years, the stability produced by many years of dedicated service from such veteran housemasters as Tony Carr (1964 to 1983), Victor Lironi (1969 to 1986) and, amongst the new generation of house parents, Eileen Mais (1994–present day), Shrawan Khanna (1993–present day) and, especially the doyen of today’s young residential staff, David McCarthy (1991–present day) has been inspirational. The epitome, however, of remarkable and exceptional house parenting has been John Queen. John literally gave a lifetime (1971–2000) of unselfish help and guidance to the boys of Whittall House. In June 2001, upon his retirement, many of these boys returned to salute him at a much deserved farewell dinner.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, an active and supportive Board of Governors continued to identify, set out and implement clearly defined goals for the school. Ever since the re-founding of Brentwood in 1961, the school had been blessed with board members who had a sound, practical business acumen combined with a strong sense of stewardship and a clear vision for the future. Now, in the late nineties, under the leadership of the Chair, Lynn Eyton (who took over from Old Brentonian, Brian Kenning, in 1997), there was an increasing awareness that for Brentwood to maintain its reputation as a leader in Canadian education; there was also a need for greater in-depth fundraising for building development and an expanded endowment fund. The problem was that clearly the best person to head up a new and heightened campaign was the already overloaded veteran Headmaster, Bill Ross.

The Board, therefore, persuaded Bill to step away from his day-to-day running of the school and shift his area of expertise to a more externally focused role as President of the Brentwood Foundation. After twenty-four outstanding years, during which he had guided and directed the school to heights barely dreamed of when it was refounded in September 1961, Bill was more than willing to take up this new challenge in order to help ensure the future of the school to which he had devoted his life. On Awards Day in June 2000, long-time colleague and friend, Nick Prowse, in a speech of appreciation and thanks, outlined Bill’s many achievements and affirmed to a receptive and appreciative audience of students, teachers, parents and governors what a huge debt of gratitude the Brentwood community owed to this remarkable man and exceptional Headmaster.

In a moving tribute to his retiring boss, Nick told his listeners that:

All around you are the visible signs of Bill Ross’s outstanding twenty-four-year tenure as Headmaster of Brentwood College. Today we can boast of a responsive and receptive student body, and a state-of-the-art facility more than capable of providing them with an

outstanding education. Yet, impressive though the bricks and mortar of Bill's achievement are, even they pale in comparison with his unique and lasting contribution in other, less tangible, aspects of the School's development . . . (for) it was Bill Ross who provided the financial acumen and educational astuteness that firmly cemented Brentwood's enviable status in Canadian independent education and launched the school into the twenty-first century as a true educational leader in Canada. The many changes and improvements that characterized Bill's leadership have provided this school with a proud and lasting legacy.

These sentiments are quickly echoed by the students themselves. It is most gratifying when listening to those boys and girls who attended the school in Bill's last decade to realize how much of what he hoped to achieve is reflected in their comments about Brentwood. The only negative observations revolve around two perennial bugbears that would immediately have brought a wry smile to the lips of Bill Ross himself, namely "bells" and "dress"! Try as he might, the satisfactory resolution of these two long-standing issues (in fact as old as the school itself) finally eluded him. They have been left for his successor to grapple with and perhaps even resolve!

The remainder of the student input reads like a list of all the educational concerns that were closest to Bill's heart. They represent the very core of his philosophy and his approach to educating young people. How often did he stress the need for a compassionate, nurturing community based upon mutual respect and caring for the individual? At how many faculty meetings did he impress upon his teachers the importance of excellence in teaching and the need for establishing close personal relationships with the students? How often did he promote to parents the value of the demanding Brentwood tripartite program and the importance of an all-round education in developing essential, ongoing life skills? In listening to these young Brentonians, who had clearly been the beneficiaries of an education under Bill Ross's leadership, it is obvious that he was indeed successful in building the kind of school he wanted and everyone in the Brentwood family has profited enormously from the process.

It is also interesting that these young Brentonians of the nineties made no mention of the sterner, more paternalistic nature of the school. Unlike their predecessors at the beginning of Bill Ross's tenure, there was no request for greater student input into their own education. The fact that this most basic of student concerns had apparently become largely a non-issue is again a tribute to Bill Ross and the kind of school he wished to build. The emergence of important, student-run organizations like the Student Activities Council and the Grad Committee, as well as the largely revamped and more student-friendly prefect system, illustrate how much more student-centred Brentwood has become and how essential, therefore, that they know and understand the meaning of responsibility. Today, the young people who make up Brentwood's student body have a "much greater say" in their own education than they did when Bill Ross was appointed Headmaster in 1976. This may be, in part, a "sign of the times," but it was also one of Bill's first objectives during his difficult and challenging first year. Ultimately, Bill's greatest achievement was keeping the school at the forefront of educational change without discarding the basic principles on which it had been founded — no easy task as the year 1976–1977 had shown.



Student Activities Council, 1999–2000. The increasing importance of student-run organizations illustrates how much more student-centred Brentwood has become.



Mrs. Andrea M. Pennells is appointed new Head of School, 2000 — “a worthy successor to David Mackenzie and Bill Ross.”

Now the time had come to look at what had been achieved and then assess how best to prepare Brentwood for the new challenges of the twenty-first century. Part of this process would inevitably involve searching for a replacement for Bill Ross, someone who could move Brentwood on to the next level without losing touch with the tried and tested traditions of the past.

In August 1999 a conference was held at Brentwood to look into the long-term objectives of the school. For two days a broad spectrum of governors and teachers brainstormed together. As part of this process a search committee was established to find a successor to Bill Ross. At its first meeting, this committee, chaired by Old Brentonian Kip Woodward and several other board members, plus a staff representative (Nick Prowse), made the critical decision to be gender blind and consider, without bias, both internal and external candidates. With the appointment of The Caldwell Partners International as the search group to find suitable candidates, both nationally and internationally, the quest to find Bill Ross's successor began. At a series of meetings in Vancouver over the next several months, the initial application list of over eighty prospective candidates was narrowed down to half a dozen excellent and promising applicants, of which two were from Brentwood College's own faculty. Extensive interviewing followed and, the

more the committee met with Andrea Pennells, the more impressed they became with the person to match the well-documented credentials and achievements. By January 2000 it was evident that she stood out clearly as the front runner. When Andrea was formally appointed in the early spring, it was a popular decision with all the parties concerned — faculty, students, parents and governors.

The changing of the guard that had begun as far away as 1985 was now complete. “Forty Years On,” the Brentwood of 2001 was a very different educational institution from the one that was refounded on the shores of Mill Bay in September 1961. Already Andrea Pennells, in her new career as Head of School, is stamping her own personality and ideas upon Brentwood. With its long-established and substantial reputation, she has a solid base to build on. There is an air of excitement and anticipation around campus. Since 1923, the Brentwood Governors have nearly always picked a winner and the general consensus is that Andrea Pennells will be as happy and as successful as her two outstanding predecessors in the new school. Certainly, she is off to a promising start.

Reviewing Andrea Pennells' new headship is obviously beyond the scope of this book. The author feels, however, that she is indeed a worthy successor to David Mackenzie and Bill Ross and he is certain that her career will be every bit as distinguished as theirs. It is indeed reassuring as the author finishes this history to know that the school to which he devoted his life is moving confidently and assuredly into the new century. Andrea's training as a historian has given her a unique perspective. She is able to combine a respect for the traditions of the past with a keen appreciation of the challenges of the future. In looking at the way the Brentwood story has unfolded, it is obvious that the school has changed radically over the course of its short but exciting lifetime. In the final chapter, an attempt will be made to account for and assess this growth from the earliest days of Mr. Hope's school, built on “honest endeavour and sports,” to the commencement, almost eighty years later, of Andrea Pennells' headship of a school whose “constellation of programs” produces “strength in diversity” and “inspires its students to reach beyond their grasp.”

Chapter Eleven: Forty Years On, 1961–2001

“The complex and ever-evolving history of this remarkable school . . .”

Lara McDonald (Director of Development)

It would be difficult to find a school anywhere that has evolved and grown more rapidly than Brentwood. Recently, the author read a history of his own school in England. The writer, also a veteran teacher of the institution concerned, covered the period 1923 to 2001 (the historical life-time of Brentwood’s existence) in a mere twenty pages, less than a quarter of his whole book, even though he admitted that “his school had changed a great deal” during this period. He concentrated instead on the long-standing and time-honoured traditions built over the many years when the school’s “name” was being established. In a young school like Brentwood, which has had little time to develop a genuine and valid culture of its own, there is a tendency to overly dissect the minutiae of the moment in order to find a solid basis for the obvious accomplishments that accompanied the growth. Inevitably, what the reader gets, therefore, is a chronology of people and events that sum up the evident success without the kind of assessment that can come only with the viewing of the “broader picture” over a longer period of time. After only forty years, far though Brentwood has come, the school is still very much a “work in progress.” Like any ongoing project, the “doing” sometimes left little time for reflection. Thus, it is really beyond this writer’s mandate to provide more than a cursory appraisal of the school as a success story. Even this meagre attempt has resulted only in an underlying theme for each chapter that provides a reason for the continuous progress and development. In reality, it has been possible only to present a rather brief look at many of the more complex and intricate issues that accompanied the growth from the difficult early days to the multifaceted and sophisticated school of today.

It does not mean, however, that genuine growing pains did not actually exist. As explained earlier, students in the sixties and early seventies in particular sometimes found the school a harsh, rough, austere place, and their feelings about Brentwood, even today, remain ambivalent. Whilst there is general agreement that the quality of the teaching was always excellent, some found the environment more akin to a house of detention than an institution of learning. The profusion of rules and regulations, the power of the prefects, the use of corporal punishment, the over-emphasis on physical activities, the spartan accommodation, the strict regimentation, and the long, tiring days could produce feelings of despondency that sometimes led to homesickness and, in extreme cases, resulted in students running away. These issues led to a number of boys of this era requesting that the author tell Brentwood’s story “warts and all.” As a teacher of a number of those who still have conflicting feelings about their Brentwood experience, the author continues to feel an obligation to express their viewpoint, but sincerely believes, nevertheless, that the overwhelming majority of Brentonians (like most of those interviewed) look back on their years at the school with nostalgia and affection. They all, however, played their part in the Brentwood story. Each and every student and teacher formed the bricks and mortar that, in such a remarkably short space of time, built the Brentwood of today.



A view from the campus,
overlooking Mill Bay.



Sunrise over Mill Bay — the beauty of the school's setting made a lasting impression upon its students.

At the author's own school the boys sang a school song that contained the words:

*When I'm a hundred, if I've been good
I'll go to heaven and Sir Andrew Judde: (school's founder)
I'll show my colours and he'll say to me
"Is the school the same as it used to be?"*

One would hope that the answer would be (as suggested by the same school's historian):

Well . . . no, Sir, not exactly

No vibrant, dynamic organization can remain the same, and this is as true of Brentwood as any other enterprising, forward-looking academic institution. Not until the late nineties was there a sense that the school had achieved most of what it set out to accomplish, and this was perhaps more the product of the weariness that was beginning to overtake the builders of the school who were now approaching retirement. Then, a dynamic and creative new Head of School, supported by a fresh generation of energetic and enthusiastic young teachers, picked up the reins from the old guard who had fashioned Brentwood and, as a result, the future, today, looks brighter than ever.

Both criticism of the past and a nostalgia for everything that was perfect and beneficial about what has gone before can be instructive for the future as long as the former does not permanently poison relationships and attitudes, and the latter does not lead to persistent resistance towards change based upon a desire to preserve the "good old days."

These final thoughts will attempt to provide an overview of Brentwood's evolution as an educational institution. Once again, in reading, as well as listening to what Brentonians have had to say about their Brentwood experience, it is obvious that the school, its philosophy and its beliefs has had a considerable, and, for the most part, positive impact upon their lives, and maybe this is the most evident gauge of the school's success. It would not be an exaggeration to say that, for most of them, Brentwood was a life-changing experience.

At the old school in Brentwood Bay, a prairie boy who went on to a distinguished career in medical science saw Brentwood College as a highly structured environment with strict discipline, corporal punishment, a well-established pecking order, compulsory games and "masters who were great characters," all of which he found "fascinating" as well as a new and totally unforgettable experience. Above all, he appreciated the friendships he made, the "broadening experience" he had and the "valuable contribution to his education." Perhaps most illuminating, he recalled that, although he came from a reasonably cultured home, it was Brentwood that inculcated him with the "glories of the Empire" and the role of "public school men" as its leaders.

In the thirteen years that separated the two schools, another great world war changed the world beyond recognition. By the time Brentwood was resurrected, the sun was setting on the British Empire and the Cold War was the new reality. Even so, faint echoes of the attitude and outlook of that former time were present amongst those who opened the new school in 1961.

Inevitably, those ideas and beliefs from a bygone age soon clashed with the realities of a world facing social upheaval. Before this conflict and discord emerged out of the confusion of Vietnam (the bombing of the North, plus the introduction of drafted U.S. ground forces in 1965 with the consequent protests), it is remarkable how much most of the boys of the early school accepted the status quo of their existence, even relished it. Today, many of their memories emphasize “hard work and the stress of physical activity” leading to “self-awareness” and the value of an “ordered, daily existence” with a clear understanding of the “right way and the wrong way” to live. Key to all this, as in the earlier Brentwood, were the “masters” (it is interesting how many of them still use this antiquated term, rather than the more generic “teachers” — perhaps a by-product of the school going co-ed). All of them recall their masters as “interesting” people with “strong personalities,” who gave unstintingly of their time and energy. The very closeness of their relationships meant that the masters became “people” rather than mere “agents of discipline.” There was “warmth and kindness” as well as correction and regimen, and herein lies the basis for the school’s success, in spite of the many obstacles that existed. The very “energy” and “expertise” and “high level of professionalism” of these teachers created “enthusiasm amongst the students” and vice versa. For the teachers, the pay was barely adequate, the facilities mediocre to say the least, and the hours exhaustingly long, but they too fed off the vigour and intensity of the students so that everyone developed strong “bonds of friendship” which made “high demands” not only possible but desirable. Only in this kind of very special atmosphere could a student veteran of this period say in later life that the Brentwood of his day “taught respect for authority and encouraged individualism!”

Whenever Old Brentonians gather, stories of their school days are told and retold. Each graduating class, each generation has its own special memories, and a recent correspondent writing to the *Brentonian* magazine captured the flavour of the sixties in two unforgettable vignettes. The author of this letter (Lorne Johanson) left the school before his final year, yet retains the warmest memories of his Brentwood days, and his recollections stress the key ingredients mentioned above as the reason for the nostalgia that can be felt by reading between the lines in these two vivid memories. Not surprisingly, given the nature of the Brentwood of the sixties, they involve corporal punishment and rugby:

Scattered memories come to us all from time to time, triggered by an event or a phrase, taking us back to favoured images of special moments long past. And yet, I find if I allow myself to dwell on that moment for just a little longer, all that time evaporates to reveal details of exquisite texture. For example the aromatic smell of pipe tobacco immediately takes me back to the stuffy den of Mr. Pope, the Housemaster of Hope House. I see myself fidgeting nervously as Mr. Pope invited me to choose one from a number of canes. The list



Evenings of Music and Dance have become a staple of the Brentwood school calendar.



Colts XV 1967–1968. Brentwood's only unbeaten Colts rugby XV is the subject of reminiscences over thirty years later by Lorne Johanson — back row right.

was something like, “Herman, Sherman, Vermin and Harry.” Mr. Pope’s sense of humour was not entirely lost to me — even then. The fidgeting was to ensure that my pajamas adequately concealed the six pairs of underwear I sported to mitigate the impact of my impending punishment for the frequent crime of dorm raiding. Dorm raiding happened shortly after we estimated that the prefects had gone to bed and usually consisted of arming one’s self with shaving cream and a pillow and stealthily sneaking down the hall to attack our peers. My dorm mates were John Sladen and Stewart (The Animal) Schmidt. No wonder I was always in trouble. That was 1966/67 — just yesterday.

Whenever I see kids playing in a field or hear of some imminent rugby match, I am quickly taken back to images of the Colts Team. The rush of memories brings with it a flood of faces, yells, the shock of cold mud in the face as you were trampled in a loose scrum and of our coach, Nicholas Barrington Prowse. The name reminded me of English nobility and it would not have surprised me if the Queen herself had long ago knighted him but he was just too modest to use the title. The school year was 1967/68 and I had more or less grown out of dorm raids. As the Junior Colts, we had been undefeated except for our archrivals Shawnigan Lake. By this time I had already developed a profound respect for Mr. Prowse and could see he wasn’t about to let the Colts be defeated by Shawnigan again. As I recall, the gym was undergoing renovations and the walls were made of plywood. Moments before this first game of the year with Shawnigan, Mr. Prowse hauled us into the gym to mentally prepare us for the match. We were instructed to pound the (plywood) gym walls and stomp the floor while belting out some kind of chant, which I believe may have included the term “kill.” I recall beginning to laugh until I noticed the faces of my comrades. Not only did their expressions indicate they meant business, but their conviction was contagious. We thundered up to the field at a full gallop and hit Shawnigan with such force that they never recovered. Under the passionate direction of our determined coach we kept up the momentum and finished the season undefeated.

A subtle change in recollections takes place after the arrival of the girls in 1972. The close relationship with the teachers is still pre-eminent in all comments written and oral, with such observations as “I found that there was a good relationship between the students and the staff which I found refreshing,” and “I feel I was really fortunate to have such dedicated and caring teachers who contributed so much of their time and energy to the students.” Increasingly, however, comments such as Brentwood “helped me find myself,” and “Brentwood allowed me to experience a variety of fields which I know I wouldn’t have been exposed to elsewhere,” show how, in the seventies and eighties, the school’s approach to education gradually changed. It became increasingly student centred with more choice and more freedom to be one’s self. Some regretted this greater flexibility and diversity, claiming (incorrectly for the most part) that it led inevitably to a deterioration in standards, but it was the wave of the future. The bells continued to ring almost fifty times a day (still a favourite student complaint), but they no longer summoned the students to obligations and duties that were narrow and limited. Now there were choices, indeed, an ever-increasing number of them. Programs remained compulsory, but the options became ever more numerous as the school moved away from the minimalist days of the old five “R’s.” There was now something for everyone, though the philosophy of “if it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing well” remained. The major problem inevitably became overcommitment by

multitalented students, rather than the issue of narrowly defined obligations that emphasized physical endeavours to the detriment of those for whom the élitism of “games” meant permanent exclusion from the coveted “inner circle.”

These important and necessary developments that played such a vital role in the evolution of Brentwood did not come without a price. The seventies were, for many Brentonians, a difficult time as both they and the school suffered through some stressful growing pains. This viewpoint is supported by a 1973 graduate who told the author thirty years later that “I would have really blossomed in today’s school but, as it was, I always thought of myself as a second-class citizen.” This is a telling comment from a Brentonian who was bright, creative and articulate at school, but a year ahead of his age group, physically immature and a mediocre athlete. Only slowly did Brentwood’s manly, robust image give way to a kinder, more considerate and inclusive one that stressed a strong sense of community and encouraged a greater latitude of expression and celebrated a broader variety of achievements. The pervasive cynicism that Bill Ross sought to dispel when he became Headmaster was very much a by-product of this narrow, limited outlook and approach. As we have already seen, it was the arrival of the girls that provided the catalyst for change with what David Mackenzie had referred to as their “civilizing effect” on the school. Even so, a recent conversation with a boy and girl of this era reminded the author (who himself had lived through this transition period) that many of the changes came hesitatingly and, occasionally, even reluctantly. On the positive side, these two Brentonians, both of whom were fine athletes, praised the intensity of the school’s approach to team sports, but also emphasized the growing acceptance of band and choir as legitimate, high-profile activities at this time. Both believed that this new-found prestige (along with Gil Bunch’s ever-popular drama program) was the product of the popularity in the school of the teachers concerned (Robert Cooper and Jimmy Johnson), plus the timely presence of girls in each enterprise. They further stressed that, though the immediate acceptance of girls’ field hockey as a major Brentwood sport augured well for the future, the continued over-emphasis on the two traditional male power-house sports, rugby and rowing, helped to perpetuate a jockish élitism that often marginalized the worth of girls on campus and promoted derision from the increasingly vocal non-conformist group for too much of this era. Even though far-removed, today, from these events of their teenage years, the memory of them inevitably produced a lively discussion in their home. (They are one of several pairs of Brentonians who subsequently married — an interesting topic in itself for a future Brentwood historian!)

Thus, as the school entered its third decade, the “jock image” slowly gave way to a more sophisticated, polished and tolerant posture that reflected the ever-increasing importance of the tripartite program. Increasingly, students were encouraged to celebrate the diversity of achievement for which the school was becoming more and more well known. Although the strong presence of Gil Bunch had always ensured a high profile for some of the more esoteric and esthetic pursuits, now they became “the norm.” In this era, for the first time, school colours (for outstanding achievement) were readily awarded in all areas of school endeavour and individual recognition by the student body of exceptional work in academics and the visual and performing arts became as universal and as popular as acknowledgement for athletic prowess.

The true benefits of the so-called Brentwood experience were beginning to manifest themselves. More and more, success was judged not by the narrow confines of the rugby field or the rowing shell, or even just the classroom, but by the broad context



Pottery has been part of the school's fine arts program since the early seventies.



Choir, 2000–2001, a tradition dating back forty years to the refounding of the school.

This broadening and expanding of the school syllabus, which helped turn Brentwood into a more benevolent, cultivated and creative society in which fine arts enjoyed equal status with sports and academics, really began when, according to the *Vancouver Sun*, eighteen girls “came, conquered and stayed” at Brentwood. David Mackenzie was quoted in this article of June 16th, 1973 as believing that “their presence would improve the school’s image.” That was certainly the view of Brentwood’s first female teacher, Norah Arthurs, when, after a year doing some substituting at the school, she joined the academic staff in 1963 to teach French 11 and French 12 for the “princely sum of \$5 per lesson.” In her own words, “I became the first female teacher ever in this rugby riddled refuge, Brentwood College.” A comment not far off the mark, since not only was rugby the boys’ major sport but the “Teachers’ Common Room was an extension of the Cowichan Rugby Club.” The Headmaster even suggested to her that “perhaps I would prefer my lunch to be brought up for me in the staffroom, so that I would not have to endure the ordeal of entering a rough and ready all-male dining room (no self-serve cafeteria in those days) and suffering strictly male-oriented conversation.” How different from the school Norah retired from in 2000, after more than thirty years of distinguished service (she left Brentwood briefly in 1967 when her husband departed Shawnigan Lake School to take up an appointment at Royal Roads Military College, but returned in 1973), during which time she was not only Head of Languages for many years, but also the Co-ordinator of Fine Arts.

Although in the games-mad school of the sixties’ Gil Bunch’s drama had always stood tall, the refining process had originally begun with significant changes to the curriculum in 1969, as a result of which the largely unnoticed and heretofore limited fine arts program was first given equal status with sports and academics on the timetable. It was the arrival of the girls, however, that led to meaningful expansion of the fine arts choices. For the first time, perhaps, Brentwood addressed the issue of the importance of a worthwhile program for all students, not just the athletically inclined. This does not mean that Brentwood was ever guilty of stereotyping the sexes — far from it for, from the first day, girls were encouraged to participate fully in all Brentwood had to offer. It is true, though, that with females on campus the school was willing to give more thought to a syllabus in which the key words were variety and choice rather than restriction and compulsion. Indeed, this increased

emphasis on accommodating all students, whether male or female, not only elevated the profile of fine arts, but also resulted finally in equal recognition for all parts of the tripartite program by the mid-eighties. In this way the character of the school was dramatically altered.

Although, on the whole, this process of innovation and change went remarkably smoothly, it was not without its difficulties and moments of tension. In the words of Ann Holden, Brentwood's first housemistress, "there was some resentment to co-education and its implications, although it was never hostile or unpleasant." Certainly though, the arrival of the girls brought changes both administrative and philosophical. The administrative changes were fairly straightforward, although a few took several years to accomplish (there were still student lists going out in the late seventies with "Boy's Name" printed at the top!), but obviously the philosophical ones were more complex and covered the full spectrum of issues from discrimination in discipline and gender inequality, to availability and strength of programs. The school's first women's rowing coach recalled the following conversation immediately prior to her appointment.

"You can coach the girls."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, dear."

"But I haven't coached before. I've only rowed."

"Don't worry; you'll be fine."

It would be inconceivable that this conversation could take place today. Sadly too, even into the eighties, in sports where girls and boys shared facilities, there was "overt and explicit discrimination from several members of the boys' team." Even casual, thoughtless remarks could hurt, such as male rowers referring to the first women's eight as "octopussy." To be realistic, however, these difficulties were, according to a Brentwood girl who survived them, "a microcosm of the dilemmas that continue to face me and others as we pursue our goals in what has been, and remains, a man's world."

By the time girls were present across all grades, a new tradition had been created at Brentwood. It was based not on doing a few designated, high-profile activities very well, but rather on the more challenging concept of doing a range of demanding endeavours that allowed for the full commitment of the many rather than the few. Although this intrinsically different approach owed much to that original group of girls and their determination to be fully involved in "a boys' school with some girls attending," the success of the venture and its subsequent effect on the educational institution called Brentwood College School would not have been possible without, first of all, "the guidance, support and encouragement of D. D. Mackenzie and T. G. Bunch" and then, subsequently, the new philosophical direction taken by Bill Ross. This ranged from appointing several female board members, including, for the first time, a mother, Sherrill MacLaren in 1980 (though she was not actually the first woman on the Board — that honour going to Mary Winspear who served from 1972 to 1976), to female head prefects (of which there have been five), to female teachers in senior administrative roles, to girls in all the grades (grade ten in 1978 and grades nine and eight in 1987), and to a female Chair of the Board of Governors (Lynn Eyton in 1997). This changed the very nature of the school itself in a complete and thorough way. Not only did the acceptance of girls at Brentwood have, as David



Mrs. Lynn Eyton, appointed Brentwood's first female Chair of the Board of Governors in 1997.



Seals, an acrylic painting by Sawa Yamamoto, Krysa Collection of Contemporary Brentonian Art.

Mackenzie predicted, “a humanizing effect on the school,” but it also altered Brentwood’s approach to education. Nowhere is this innovative shift in philosophy more obvious than in the makeup of the campus and the career of Andrea Pennells. With regard to the former, with the opening of Mackenzie House (see Chapter Nine), one of the school’s two main driveways was now flanked on both sides by two girls’ residences, “bringing to the attention of every visitor, the strong presence of females on campus.” Meanwhile, the meteoric rise of the latter from “barefoot, pregnant and in the kitchen” upon her arrival at Brentwood (when her husband Gerry was appointed to the staff in 1982) to Assistant Head ten years later illustrates how far the school had progressed as a genuinely co-educational academic institution, rather than merely the more usual “boys school that happened to take girls.”

A perusal of *Insight* and the *Brentonian* magazine publications during the nineties reveals the profound nature and extent of this change. A teacher from the sixties, who had kept in touch with the school after he left, was able to write a letter to Ivor Ford in 1995 in which he observed, “It seems like the school moved over the years to providing a wider balance than in my day” (1963–1964). The key words here, of course, are “wider balance,” for the growth of the fine arts,

which coincided with the arrival of girls on campus, was accompanied (to the surprise of the more sceptical traditionalists) by continued strength in the more conventional areas of academics and sports. Several national scholars, increasingly successful Ivy League applicants, superior provincial exam results and numerous British Columbia scholars, as well as an almost one-hundred-percent success rate in post-secondary placements went hand-in-hand with the expected achievements in sports.

This decade saw Brentwood crews win the élite Calder-Clelland Trophy three times in a row at the Canadian Secondary Schools Championships, the Princess Elizabeth Cup at Henley (Britain’s unofficial school’s championship) and gain a gold medal in the pairs event at the World Junior Championships. At the same time, the other sports were not far behind, with the 1st XV reached the final of the “AAA” B.C. High Schools Championships, the girls’ field hockey team coming as high as third, also at the “AAA” B.C. High Schools Championships and, of course, the tennis team winning the “AA” provincial title three times in a row. In addition, the boys’ soccer XI reached the “AA” B.C. High Schools Championships for the first time, and girls’ volleyball and boys’ and girls’ basketball regularly reached the Vancouver Island Regional High Schools play-offs at the “AA” or “A” levels. Not bad for a school that was still small by provincial standards. Obviously, diversification had not affected Brentwood’s performance in team sports, even if it meant that the students were busier than they had ever been. All this success, of course, was expected, as there was a strong tradition of excellence in these games stretching back for over three decades. It was in the fine arts that the real flowering took place, a direct outcome of the innovations that transformed Brentwood in the eighties.

Although academic and athletic achievements would always attract media attention and public approval, the school now showed how highly it valued the fine arts. The new Brentwood Art Gallery displaying student work (as selected and displayed by art teacher, Geri Leigh) was opened in the foyer of the Ross Academic Centre and later continued along the corridor of the

main floor. At the same time, the Leo J. Krysa Family Brentwood College Art Trust was established to purchase and display artistic pieces by former and current students. Amongst the earliest pieces selected were the paintings of Sawa Yamamoto (1993), the first current student so honoured, and Old Brentonians Kent Crawford (1974) and Martin Whist (1985). It was no accident given the school's long tradition of attracting talented all-rounders that Sawa was also a fine, award-winning mathematician and Kent and Martin were both distinguished 1st XV rugby players. In addition, Evenings of Jazz and Dance and Evenings of Music highlighting the school's leading vocalists, instrumentalists and dancers were presented to the public, and the musical theatre department continued its high-profile annual musical productions. To emphasize this important role of fine arts in the school, the now internationally renowned Brentwood International Rowing Regatta was also used as a vehicle to promote the creative side of Brentwood with outdoor jazz concerts, art displays, and modern dance presentations.

More and more concerts, and an ever-greater variety of student talent on display, revealed the students' inexhaustible reservoir of ideas, producing enthusiastic audiences, sensitive responses and inspired performances that were symptomatic of the spirit of caring, nurturing and feelings of mutual respect that pervaded the campus during this exciting era when the school reached the pinnacle of success. Of all Bill Ross's achievements, this was to be his most visible and it was a legacy of priceless value that set the standard for the years to come. The students' appreciation of his efforts can be seen in such comments as, "fine arts were the major force in my school experience," "acting was my version of team sports," "to be allowed to be creative gave me an escape from the pressure of academics." "Brentwood expanded my horizons and presented me with huge opportunities through a broad range of programs," and "fine arts perfectly complemented the competitive challenge of academics and sports." Nobody could ask for a finer salute to his endeavours.

Meanwhile, from 1993 onwards, the T. Gil Bunch Cup for "scholastic and artistic excellence, stability and strength of character, together with a willingness to serve" not only honoured the inspirational career of Brentwood's one and only "man for all seasons," but also put the fine arts for the first time on a par with Brentwood's long-standing, prestigious award for leadership and scholastic and athletic achievement, the Yarrow Shield. It was particularly fitting that the first winner, who received the award from Gil himself, was Brock Harris, a "lifer" (meaning he attended Brentwood from grade eight to grade twelve) who had not only excelled at school on the stage, in Gil's celebrated Literature 12 class and as head of Rogers House, but had also won a top scholarship to the University of Southern California to study screenwriting.

Indeed, the T. Gil Bunch Cup, with its close ties to the Holmes family (it was originally presented by family members in memory of Major H. C. Holmes, co-founder of Brentwood College and long-time governor of the original school), not only at last truly rounded out Brentwood's major awards, but also reinforced yet again the concept of service that had been so close to the hearts of the school's first Headmaster and its governors. Indeed, close inspection of the rubrics for all Brentwood's special awards presented at the closing ceremonies each year reveals that within a highly complex program that saluted a plethora of individual achievements, there was a common strand based on "selflessness," "strength of character," "personal charisma" and



School awards, including the Yarrow Shield and the Butchart Trophy from the original school, and the T. Gil Bunch Cup. Since the school's founding, the emphasis has been on "leadership," "scholastic and artistic excellence," "strength of character" and "a willingness to serve."



The docks and Mill Bay from the academic building. Mill Bay has been Brentwood's biggest "playing field."

"leadership" running through each and every major award. These fine human qualities are at the very heart of Brentwood's success as a school and yet it is difficult to quantify them in a chronological history of people and events that have made up the Brentwood story. Reading between the lines, they are ever-present, but never actually saluted as such. It is, therefore, perhaps fitting to end this brief overview of Brentwood's unfolding biography by saluting, in particular, all those outstanding students who over the years served as Brentwood's head prefects, but whose names are not recorded in this history. Their responsibilities were great, their role always challenging and their success worthy of the praise and admiration of the school that they served so willingly and generously. In recognizing their enormous contribution to the success of the school they worked for so tirelessly, the author would like to make special mention of the unique contribution of two pairs of siblings who have served in this role in the present school — Sita (1988–1989) and Asha (1991–1992) Rao, and Sam (1992–1993) and Bill (1994–1995) Boyte. Other pairs of siblings who have likewise succeeded each other in major roles in the school include Derek (1974–1975) and Brian (1978) Sharpe, and Gregor (1990) and Robert (1994) Dixon as captains of rugby, and Aoibhinn (1993) and Anna (1994) Grimes as captains of field hockey. The Grimes sisters of Duncan also have the unique distinction of winning the Yarrow Shield in successive years.

Not surprisingly, these exceptional brother-and-sister acts also confirm another remarkable thread in the school's history, namely the strong ties that have bound so many families to the school over the years. In the original Brentwood, of course, the Gillespie, the Holmes and the Scott-Moncrieff families, and, since 1961, the Stones, the Bramalls, the Mills (from Kitimat) and the Woodwards, to mention but a few, have exemplified the filial loyalty that has become such a Brentwood hallmark over the last seven decades. Now, as the "new" school moves towards its golden jubilee and the next generation of Brentonians follow their parents into the present school, many more families will in the years to come assuredly emulate the worthy tradition established by Hugh Cupples (2001) when he followed in the footsteps of his father, Brodie (1973–74) as captain of the 1st XV.

Today, with the dawning of a new century, the torch has passed to a new Head who herself played a major role in the successful striving for excellence through diversity that personified the nineties, having been the Director of Fine Arts and Assistant Head during this decade of unparalleled growth and high accomplishment. Andrea Pennells has the intellect, the management skills, and the vision to carry Brentwood to the next level. The school could not be in better hands. The future is bright indeed. Those long-ago Victoria businessmen, who pooled their resources to start Brentwood College, would be amazed and gratified to witness in today's complex and sophisticated school the faint but clear silhouette of their own "college of unique and interesting character" that they originally founded with such high hopes on the shores of the Saanich Inlet almost eighty years ago.



Afterword

Only just prior to publication did I receive the formatted version of this history, complete with photographs from the school's archives. It was truly amazing how the pictures brought this history to life. Even though I had selected many of them, seeing them as an integral part of the written text for the first time was a real thrill. The result, in my view, is an outstanding coffee table book that really presents the reader with an intimate but, at the same time, both realistic and affectionate look at a school that has been such an important part of so many young people's lives. It's probable that Brentwood will never again go through a period of such rapid growth and development as it did between 1961 and 2001. Thus the vantage point of those of us who lived through this experience will grow more valuable with time. This history is more than an exercise in nostalgia; it is a gift from those who built Brentwood to those Brentonians still to come, so that they may truly understand the school of which they, one day, will be privileged to be a part.

